

THE 2ND BATTALION DERBYSHIRE REGIMENT
IN THE SIKKIM EXPEDITION OF 1888

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No. 1.—Sketch to accompany Note by D. Q. M. G., dated 1st December 1887.



The Fort at Singu as seen
through a powerful glass
from Dolepion in
Sikkim

THE DERBYSHIRE CAMPAIGN SERIES.

No. 4

The 2nd Battalion Derbyshire Regiment in the Sikkim Expedition of 1888

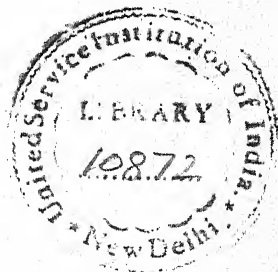
BY

CAPTAIN H. A. IGGULDEN,
2ND BATTALION DERBYSHIRE REGIMENT,

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY

SIR STEUART BAYLEY, K.C.S.I.,
Member of the Council at the India Office, and sometime
Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal.

"Lest we forget."



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INTRODUCTION.

The immediate cause of the Sikkim Expedition of 1888 was the despatch by the Thibetan authorities of an armed force of 300 men, across the Sikkim Frontier, to occupy a position at Lingtu which commanded the trade route between Darjeeling and Thibet. The circumstances, however, which had led up to the outrage, and the considerations which permitted the Government of India to sit quiet under it from September, 1886, till March, 1888, require further explanation; they were in reality the outcome of our relations with Sikkim, and of our endeavour to open up trade with Thibet, through that country. Our first engagement with Sikkim dates from the conclusion of the Nepal war, when in 1817 we restored to Sikkim a great portion of the country wrested from it by the encroachments of Nepal during the previous forty years—and indeed added to it. This engagement distinctly affirmed the feudatory position of the Maharajah of Sikkim to the British Government.

In 1835 he ceded to us the district of Darjeeling, and was subsequently granted an allowance of 6000 rupees a year, increased at a later period to 12,000 rupees. In 1849, and again in 1860, punitive measures had to be adopted in consequence of gross outrages on

the part of the Sikkim authorities, and the latter expedition, under Colonel Gawler, with the Honourable A. Eden as political officer, led to the adoption of a fresh treaty in 1861. This treaty, after providing for the expenses of the war, good behaviour, extradition, trade, &c., contains some special provisions bearing on the subsequent trouble with Thibet. (1) The British Government acquired the right to make a road through Sikkim. (2) Sikkim undertook that its whole military force should join and aid British troops when employed in the hills. (3) That it should not cede or lease territory to any other state without permission of the British Government. (4) That no armed force belonging to any other state should pass through Sikkim without the sanction of the British Government. (5) That the Maharajah should transfer the seat of his Government from Chumbi, in Thibet, to Sikkim, and should reside there for nine months in every year.

For the next twenty years things went fairly well; the road from Darjeeling to the Thibetan Frontier at the Jelap Pass was made under the auspices of Mr. (now Sir John) Edgar, and traders began to make use of it; and save for a suspicion of some secret negotiation in 1879 between the Sikkim Minister, with the Thibetans and the Chinese Amban (resident), the influence of the Thibetans over the Sikkim Government seems to have led to no serious apprehensions. But the influence was always there, and there was always a Thibetanising party among the

Maharajah's entourage. The dynasty, it should be explained, was possibly of Thibetan extraction; the ruling chief had certainly for several generations received his wife from Thibet. The family estate, or jaghir, was at Chumbi, on the Thibetan side of the Jelap. These circumstances led to close relations with Thibet, and to the Maharajah spending much of his time there. On the other hand the Maharajah's own people of Sikkim were Lepchas, differing in race and language from the Thibetans, and to them the growth of Thibetan influences at Court was very unwelcome. To this feeling was due the insertion in the treaty of 1861 of the unusual provision, that the Rajah should reside for nine months in Sikkim and have the headquarters of his Government there. And the situation can only be understood by bearing in mind that there were two parties in Sikkim, one trying to bring the Rajah and his policy under the influence and sway of the Thibetan officials; the other, that of the leading Lepcha families, striving to exclude Thibetan influence and looking to the Rajah's dependence on the Indian Authorities as the main safeguard of the situation.

In 1880 the Maharajah's wife died. By the influence of his mother and relatives living at Chumbi, he was betrothed to the daughter of a minor Thibetan Official. This lady—after the polyandrous habits of the Thibetans—lived during the period of her betrothal with the Maharajah's half-brother, Tinklè—a pure Thibetan—and bore a child by him before she

had seen the Rajah. She soon, however, acquired extensive influence over the Rajah, and while the tension between the two parties in the Sikkim State became daily more acute, the Thibetan influence rapidly preponderated, till in 1885 the Rajah went to Chumbi and remained there for two years, and became wholly estranged from his Sikkim advisers. In the meantime he had entered into direct engagements of subordination with Thibet and China; when the Indian Government withheld his pension, he ordered his officials in Sikkim to collect all the revenue they could get together and to send it to him in Thibet. When the Lieutenant-Governor summoned him into Darjeeling, he replied by saying that the Thibetan and Chinese Governments had forbidden him to obey. He had thus openly repudiated his treaty engagements, and it would have been, in any case, necessary to take measures to enforce them and to strengthen the party friendly to us in Sikkim, when the question became seriously complicated by the direct action of the Thibetans.

It was known that the making of the road to the Jelap, &c., had been viewed with some apprehension by Thibet, or at least by the predominating Lama-class in Thibet. These latter are great traders, and in their hands lies the monopoly of the trade in China tea—used by every man, woman, and child in the country—and anything which facilitates external competition with their very profitable business would naturally be unwelcome. On the top of

this came—in 1885-86—the proposal to send a serious commercial mission into Thibet under Mr. Macaulay. This proposal commended itself warmly to Lord Randolph Churchill, the Secretary of State for India, and Her Majesty's Government applied for and received the permission of the Chinese (not of the Thibetan) Authorities for the mission to go. Considerable preparations were made at Darjeeling and created real alarm among the Thibetans. The nature and scope of the mission was enormously exaggerated; the Thibetans professed to believe that their religion and independence were in danger, at all events their pronounced hostility so worked on the Chinese Authorities that a formal request was made by them to Her Majesty's Government that the mission should be withdrawn; and accordingly withdrawn it was. While the negotiations for withdrawal were going on in another part of the world, the Thibetan Authorities adopted the measure spoken of above; they marched 300 men into Sikkim territory, 13 miles across the Frontier, occupied and roughly fortified a position astride the Darjeeling—Thibet road, stopped all trade, and treated the country as their own. The Maharajah at Chumbi neither remonstrated nor opposed, nor even reported the outrage to the British Authorities; in other words he acquiesced as a Feudatory of Thibet.

To him and to others it must have appeared as if the Government of India acquiesced likewise. No steps were taken to turn out the Thibetans. At first it was thought, not un-

naturally, that the withdrawal of the mission would be followed by the withdrawal of the Thibetans. It was not so; they showed that they intended to yield to nothing but force, and force Lord Dufferin would not employ if he could help it. Diplomatically, of course, China as the suzerain of Thibet is responsible for the actions of its Feudatory and negotiates on her behalf; but in practice China, even then, could influence Thibet only to a small extent and after applying protracted pressure. The Government, however, both in Simla and in London, was at that time, like the rest of the world, impressed with a belief in the reality of the Chinese power, and it was decided to endeavour, through the British Ambassador at Peking, to secure the withdrawal of the armed Thibetans, by order of the Chinese Emperor.

In the cold weather of 1886 a handful of armed police might have secured this by direct action (but it was difficult then to foresee what the consequences of such action might be), and probably nothing more would have been heard of it. By relying on the powerful Chinese Empire we had to postpone all action for a year and a half, and then to send a large and costly expedition to do what the Chinese Government undertook, but neither could nor would perform. The British Ambassador in Peking was occupied in negotiating with the Tsungli Yamen from February, 1887, for the rest of the year. Ultimately, in October, Lord Dufferin getting no reply, observed that as the

matter seemed to be of small importance to the Chinese Government, he should proceed to turn the Thibetans out at once. This was answered from China with excuses, and further requests for delay, which was so far conceded that notice, both to the Chinese Government and to the Thibetan authorities, was given, that if the Thibetans had not evacuated Lingtu by the 15th March, 1888, force would be applied to expel them. The 15th March was chosen as the earliest date on which military operations at that altitude could be conveniently undertaken. As a matter of fact preparations were made in January, with the best effect so far as our sympathisers in Sikkim were concerned, and five days after the term of grace given by Lord Dufferin had expired the expulsion was effected.

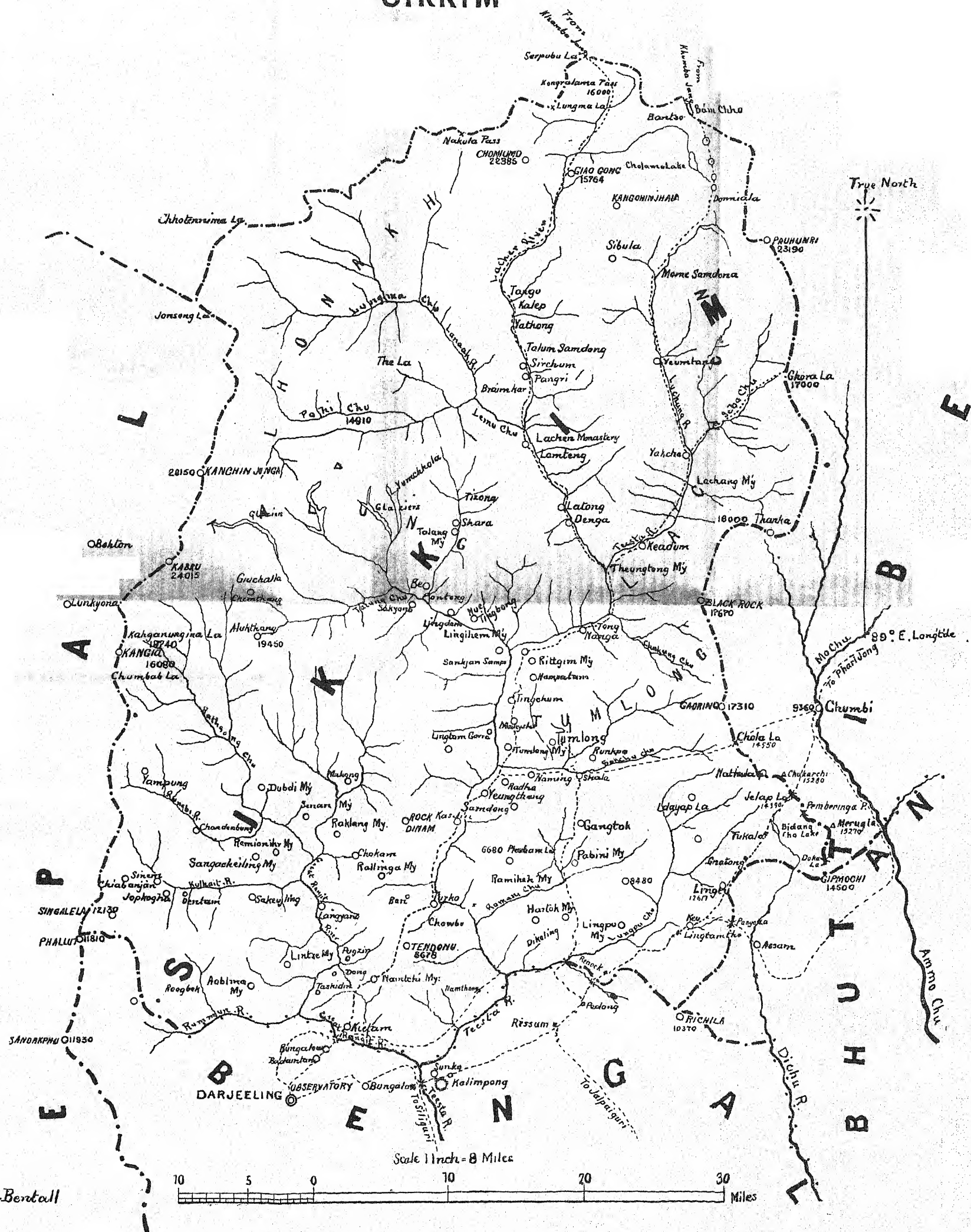
This is not the place to deal with the events of the campaign, but a few words are necessary as to the diplomatic results obtained by the exertions of our troops.

The Thibetans were defeated, driven over the Jelapla, pursued to Chumbi, and dispersed at the end of September, 1888. On the 5th October the Chinese resident or Amban sent word that he was coming to make peace. After weary weeks of waiting, evasion, excuses, and intrigue, he ultimately arrived on the 21st December, and negotiations were carried on ineffectually for about a month. Sir M. Durand and Mr. Paul, who were the representatives of the Indian Government, finally broke off the negotiations at the end

of January, on the refusal of the Chinese representative to relinquish, on the part of Thibet, all claim to suzerainty over Sikkim. The Chinese resident, however, was bidden by his Government to remain where he was: Mr. Hart, of the Chinese customs service, was sent by that Government to assist him, and arrived in March. Negotiations were again begun, but all this delay rendered it necessary to retain British troops for another year in the desolate camp at Gnatong, at an elevation of some 12,000 feet above the sea, and only in 1890 was the convention ultimately signed. The agreement provided for the boundary between Thibet and Sikkim being settled in accordance with our contentions; for the recognition of the British Protectorate over Sikkim, with *exclusive* control over its internal administration and its foreign relations; and in the future, for trade facilities, which have, I may add, been systematically evaded. So far as Sikkim is concerned, the effect has been admirable; the country is progressing peaceably and rapidly, untroubled by Thibetan aggressiveness. The Maharajah made one more attempt to return surreptitiously to Thibet, but was detained by the Nepalese, through whose territory he attempted to pass, and was ignominiously brought back. But the Thibetans—save for the lesson they learnt in the fighting at Gnatong and on the Tukola—were let off very cheaply for their wanton aggression.

STEUART BAYLEY.

Sketch Map of SIKKIM



Copied by A.M. Bentall
10.6.99.

CHAPTER I.

Natural features and extent of Sikkim—Religion and politics.

BEFORE proceeding to describe in detail the part the 2nd Battalion Derbyshire Regiment took in the military operations known to history as the Sikkim campaign, which occurred during 1888, it is as well, I think, to give some short description of the country and the people of Sikkim.

Sikkim is an Independent State whose territory comprises some 3600 square miles of country, wedged in between the larger Independent States of Nepal and Bhutan, which occupy that large strip of country immediately under the great range of the Himalaya mountains to the north of Bengal and the North West Provinces of India. Sikkim is bounded on the north by Thibet, on the south by Bengal, on the east by Thibet and Bhutan, and on the west by Nepal; it is, roughly speaking, a parallelogram of about ninety miles in length by forty miles in breadth. Situated on the southern slope of the Himalayas, Sikkim is an extremely mountainous country, containing some of the grandest mountain scenery in the world. Its boundaries, indeed, are for the greater part in perpetual snow, and that most remarkable mountain Kinchinjunga, which, with Mount Everest in Nepal, competes for the sovereignty of the mountain world, is on the boundary between Sikkim and Nepal, and towers to the immense height of 28,156 feet. The country is intersected with deep valleys containing rivers and streams draining the snows, which are ever in view, on almost all sides. The principal rivers, the

Teesta and Ranjeet, have their junction some eight miles only from Darjeeling. The mountains rise precipitously from the rivers and streams, and there is next to no level ground throughout the whole country. Owing to the large rainfall attracted by the adjacent snows, the mountains of Sikkim are densely clothed with rank and luxuriant vegetation, and the thickest and most impenetrable jungle of cane, bamboo, wild plantain, tree ferns, and quantities of other exotic trees and plants too numerous to mention. Suffice it to say that it is impossible, where paths and clearings have not been made, to move off the beaten track in any direction. This dense vegetation exists up to 8000 feet, above which the cane and bamboo cease, and the evergreen-oak, rhododendron, and species of fir tree take their place up to 12,000 or 13,000 feet, beyond which altitude all vegetation gets sparse, and the mountain sides remain exposed, when not covered by snow. It will be understood, therefore, that the country in which our military operations against the Thibetans was to take place, was of a nature likely to occasion considerable hardships and difficulties to the troops employed.

China, the nominal suzerain power of Thibet, had been frequently approached diplomatically to settle our disputes with the Thibetans and to compel them to retire to their own frontier; but she either could not or would not do anything in the matter.

Consequently, at the beginning of 1888, after all diplomatic efforts had failed, it was decided to enforce our rights in Sikkim, and expel the Thibetans by force, if needs be, from that country. China was politely informed of our intentions, and in February, 1888, orders were issued by the Government of India for the formation of a small force under Colonel Graham, R.A., to effect the desired object, and restore order once more in Sikkim.

The Sikkim Field Force detailed under Colonel Graham, R.A., who was given the local rank of

Brigadier-General, was, to commence with, composed as follows:—4 guns of Mountain Artillery (No. 9-1 Northern Division R.A.,) under Major Keith; 200 men 2nd Battalion Derbyshire Infantry, under Captain Wylly; one regiment, 700 strong, 32nd Pioneers (Musbee Sikhs), under Lieut.-Colonel Sir Benjamin Bromhead; 400 men 13th Bengal Infantry, under Lieut.-Colonel Mitchell;—with orders to assemble at Padong in Sikkim on March 12th 1888, and having its base at Silligori, the junction of the Eastern Bengal and Darjeeling Railways, a place some eight miles from the foot of the Himalayas, near the debouchure of the river Teesta. The whole force numbered some 1300 men, with 4 guns, and with a proportionate number of Medical Officers, Transport, &c. This force was subsequently increased in August, 1888, by two more guns, 9-1 R.A.; 300 men of the 2nd Derbyshire Regiment, under Lieut.-Colonel McCleverty; and the 2nd Battalion 1st Regiment of Gurkhas, 600 strong, under Lieut.-Colonel Rogers; and again in October, 1888, by a company of Bengal Sappers and Miners, under Captain Sandbach, R.E.

In penning the history of this campaign, the author would wish it to be clearly understood that the narrative is dealt with purely from a regimental point of view, and that in the following pages the object is to describe the important part taken in the Sikkim campaign by the men of the 2nd Battalion Derbyshire (95th) Regiment, who, with the Mountain Battery No. 9-1 R.A., were the only British troops who served in this unique and rather tiresome hill war; unique, because it took place at an altitude and under climatic conditions unparalleled in the history of British Frontier Wars, and irksome on account of its long duration and the negative and indecisive action of the British Government, due to fear of complications with China.

CHAPTER II.

G and H Companies Derbyshire Regiment join Sikkim Field Force—Leave Dum Dum by rail to Silligori—March up the Teesta Valley to Padong—Disposition of the Force.

It was notified in the Indian daily papers on January 28th, 1888, that two companies of the 2nd Battalion Derbyshire Regiment, then stationed at Dum Dum, some eight miles from Calcutta, would be sent to Sikkim, to form part of the force to quell the disturbance there, but it was not until late at night on the 25th of February that orders arrived in the regiment for two companies, 100 strong each, to hold themselves in immediate readiness to depart for active service in Sikkim.

Lieut.-Colonel Golding, who then commanded the 2nd Derbyshire Regiment, detailed letters G and H Companies to go, and there was great excitement amongst the subaltern officers as to who would be told off to make up the full complement of three officers per company. Letter G Company was Captain Harold Wyll's company, and letter H Company Captain E. Gosset's company. It was finally settled that Lieutenants J. Bowman and H. Iggulden should be the two subalterns of G Company, and Lieutenants G. E. Temple and A. Heyman, of H Company. All these officers, with the exception of Lieutenant A. Heyman, had seen previous active service in Egypt in 1882. The companies were made up to a hundred strong each, all weakly men were

weeded out, and volunteers from other companies taken in their place, so that when the order came after a few days for the men to entrain, and the two companies marched down to the railway station, there was every reason for the regiment to be proud of the first instalment of men despatched by it for active service in Sikkim, as it would have been hard to have found a finer-looking lot of men than the Sikkim detachment of the Derbyshire Regiment in the Indian Army.

The two companies of the regiment under Captain Gosset left Dum Dum by train at mid-day on the 6th of March, 1888, being seen off by the remainder of the regiment. Lieut.-Colonel Golding, whose tenure of command was about to expire, made a short and stirring speech to the men previous to their marching off, and in wishing them "Good-bye" said how proud he was that one of his last acts with the 95th was to despatch part of his regiment on active service, although much regretting at the same time that he was unable to accompany them. He complimented the men on their fine appearance, and in wishing them God speed felt sure that they would do credit to their country and the good name of their regiment.

We proceeded by rail from Dum Dum to Silligori, about 350 miles, having to cross the Ganges at Sara Ghat by steamer at about eleven at night, which necessitated some labour on the men loading and unloading baggage; and Lower Bengal at the beginning of March is tolerably hot.

Silligori, the base of the operations, was reached on the afternoon of the 7th of March, where we found Captain Wyllly, who now took over the command of the detachment, as being the senior officer.

The camp was about a quarter of a mile from the station, and we were accommodated in huts made of grass and bamboo, as we did not receive our tents till we reached Padong, a place in Sikkim four marches

on. We found this place, Silligori, which is at the foot of the Himalayas and is the junction of the Eastern Bengal and Darjeeling Railways, much cooler than Dum Dum.

The detachment soon had its baggage in camp, and, with a welcome wash after the cramped and dusty railway journey, was fairly comfortable. We were informed that we should not be required to march from Silligori till the 9th March, so had a day in camp to spare. This Captain Wyllly wisely occupied in telling-off and mule-loading parades; very necessary proceedings, as it was found a good many men had forgotten how to pack and load mules, which were to be our transport. All old campaigners know the great importance of packing and loading baggage properly to start with on a march in mountainous country, and so prevent frequent halts to readjust loads, besides preventing galls to the mules and endless bother to the baggage guard; so that it always pays to devote great attention to this subject previous to a march, as enormous fatigue is saved both to men and animals by starting the transport with properly adjusted loads.

Whilst at Silligori the Viceroy, Lord Dufferin, passed through on his way from Darjeeling to Calcutta. Our Brigadier, Colonel Graham, R.A., with his D.A.A.G., Captain Travers, had met the detachment on its arrival at Silligori, and the General had expressed his approbation at the appearance of the men. These officers proceeded post haste *viâ* Darjeeling to Padong, a place on the borders of Independent Sikkim, which was to be the rendezvous of the Sikkim Field Force.

Our route from Silligori to Padong occupied four marches, the total distance being fifty-two miles. The first three of these marches lay for the greater part along the Teesta valley, through which the largest of the Sikkim rivers of that name flows, and along which there was an excellent cart road, rendering

wheeled transport possible. This road went as far as the Teesta suspension bridge, some eighteen miles below Darjeeling, and was largely used by the tea-planters of the Dooars and Teesta valley for conveying their produce to the rail head at Silligori.

On the 9th March the detachment of the Derbys paraded at four a.m., and after the mules had been loaded, each man was made to swallow two grains of quinine, which dose was repeated morning and evening for the next three days until we ascended above the feverish and malarious regions of the Terai and the valley of the Teesta.

The march this day was to Sibhook, about twelve and a-half miles, and at five a.m. the Derbys stepped off cheerfully on their first march of the campaign with all the precautions of war, notwithstanding we should not arrive in the enemies' country for about five marches. The road all the way was pretty level, though very dusty, and after proceeding about seven miles we entered that belt of forest extending for hundreds of miles along the bottom of the Himalayas, and known as the Terai. The vegetation became very dense, with immense orchid-clad trees, tall reeds and grass, and trailing creepers, in which elephants, tigers, bison, and game of all sorts is said to be common. As the reeds on each side of the road had been burnt, we arrived at the end of our march looking like chimney sweeps. We found a clearing had been made in the forest at Sibhook for our camp, and bamboo huts thatched with wild plantain leaves provided as shelter.

Camp Sibhook is situated at the foot of the Himalayas, a few hundred yards from the debouchure of the river Teesta, and is surrounded by the densest forest, being about as jungly a place as one could wish for. The river Teesta is here a deep, rapid stream, about 150 yards wide at this time of the year. The water is of a greenish colour, and very cold, as it comes straight from the snows. I think every man

availed himself of a cold and refreshing wash in the river, though swimming, owing to the strong current, was forbidden as dangerous; indeed, the water was too cold for any one to think of staying in long. Tracks of various wild beasts, including tiger and bison, were seen, but the forest was too dense to admit of anything being shot on foot or without an elephant.

The huts that had been run up for us at these camping grounds along the Teesta valley, by the Public Works Department, were very rough affairs, only affording shelter from the sun. The likelihood of rain happening at this time of the year in this country being considered as extremely remote, all the tents had been forwarded to Padong in advance. The unexpected, however, generally happens in these cases, and for the next three nights we had torrents of rain, and the huts leaking like sieves and being useless as a protection from rain, all hands got very wet and uncomfortable; our first night on the campaign was by no means a happy one, and we all wished heartily we had brought tents with us.

On the 10th of March we proceeded up the Teesta valley to a camp called Rongli, distance twelve and a-half miles. We were late starting off, as everything was wet owing to the previous night's soaking. The morning, however, was fine and the sun and exercise of marching soon dispelled all traces of dampness, and the Derbys stepped gaily out, as they well knew how to, reaching Rongli in excellent time. The route this day, although we were well in the mountains, was still quite level, the road lying along the right bank of the Teesta all the way. The scenery was very beautiful, and in the early morning, with the wild jungle cock shrilly crowing defiance to his enemy across the valley, to be replied to in the same strain, the bright coloured parrots and other tropical birds flying about, made a peaceful and animated sylvan scene calculated to rouse to enthusiasm a naturalist's or an artist's

fancies. Towards midday we found the valley a little steamy, the Teesta running for the most part through a narrow gorge, with hills rising almost 2000 feet very precipitously from its banks.

The camping ground at Rongli was a mere clearing in the jungle with a few sun-proof huts. There was no sickness, sore feet, or falling out amongst the men, and the quinine kept off the fever. At this camp the officers were most hospitably entertained by a tea-planting gentleman of the name of Mr. Allies, who very kindly had a most lavish breakfast ready for us on our arrival in camp. Needless to say his kind forethought was most welcome, and ample justice was done to the good fare provided.

We had more rain at night, but the men were this time prepared for it, and managed to effectually shelter themselves by waterproof sheets. Large fires were kept burning round the camp all night to keep off malaria, as this was a feverish-looking place.

March 11th.—To Kalimpong, a distance of about fourteen miles. We found this a very severe march, as being our first day at hill climbing. A few weeks later we should have thought nothing of it. The first six miles lay alongside the Teesta, which was then crossed by a narrow suspension bridge, where the cart road ceases. The suspension bridge is 710 feet above the level of the sea, and in the next seven miles we had a rise of over 3200 feet to Kalimpong, which is 3930 feet above sea level. However, the climb did us a lot of good, in getting some of the yellow fat off, and although the last half of the road was bad and the sun was hot, everything was safely in camp by noon. Kalimpong is a place of some importance in British Sikkim, and there is a large weekly market there on Sundays, and also a missionary establishment. We found the bazaar in full swing on our arrival, and Tommy was able to provide himself with excellent fresh eggs, milk, and butter galore. In the evening

we had a sing-song round a huge bamboo fire to pass the time. The large bamboos round here, when burnt, make the most alarming reports, by the air between the joints getting heated and exploding loudly. The sing-song was a success, and such songs as "The Wanderer," "Bald-headed Swell," "Money," and the "Unofficial Inspection" were most popularly received; songs which I fancy are not often sung now-a-days, having gone out of fashion. As usual about 10.30 p.m., it came on to rain heavily, and the huts were dreadfully leaky, and being placed on a slope, caused the rain to wash through them. The Missionary Padre sheltered a good many men in his place close by, and provided them with tea and cheroots, his hospitality being much appreciated by the Derbys.

From Kalimpong to Padong, where the force assembled, is fourteen miles along a good road. We did not leave Kalimpong till ten a.m., as we were now fairly in the mountains, with a cool temperate climate, and could therefore march all day; and as the morning was bright and sunny, the men's bedding was first dried before we set out. The road for the first nine miles was a gradual ascent to the top of a ridge 6100 feet high, and then an easy descent to Padong 4700 feet high. At Padong we found General Graham and his staff, together with four guns of the Mountain Battery No. 9-1 D, R.A., and the left wing of the 32nd Pioneers, a regiment composed of Muzbee Sikhs, fine hardy men, accustomed to wield the pick and shovel.

We here received our tents, which we were glad to get after the leaky huts with which we had to put up for the last few nights, for it seemed to rain every night pretty regularly.

We had a good camping ground, and found Padong a pleasant enough place, remaining there till the morning of the 16th March, when the forward movement commenced.

From Padong, in the early morning, the fort wall of Lingtu, which was to be our objective, and was the cause of the present trouble, was clearly visible with a good telescope. It looked mighty high, bleak, and cold, being covered with snow.

Lingtu appeared to be the end of a ridge some 13,000 feet high, with steep and precipitous sides, formed of masses of rock and clothed in snow. The forest seemed to end some 2000 feet below it. The line of wall the Thibetans had built seemed to be a very long one, crowning the height, with a bastion or tower at each end, a gate and fort in the middle, both flanks of the wall ending in precipitous ground, and, at this distance, looked an uncommonly strong spot, which would require a lot of taking if resolutely defended. There were many long poles on the wall, from which fluttered multi-coloured pieces of silk and cotton printed with Bhuddist prayers. It being one of the beliefs of this religion that prayers can be said by proxy, many and ingenious are the contrivances they have of saying them; by windmills, water-mills, prayer-wheels turned by the hand, prayers fluttering in the wind, and several other devices too numerous to mention. You merely have to write the mystic sentence—"Om mani padmi hun," which means "Oh, the jewel in the lotus," and is the universal Bhuddist prayer, on something, and arrange to have it revolved in some machine or other, and a prayer is placed to your credit in the world to come by each revolution. No respectable Bhuddist calculates on doing much good under a few hundred thousand prayers daily; for, you see, 10,000 prayers can be quickly said by writing "Om mani padmi hun" on a piece of paper one hundred times and spinning it round in a prayer box one hundred times! The lamas or Bhuddist priests, I believe, do a considerable trade amongst the laity in the prayer line, and do it cheap too!

On the 15th March the troops at Padong were

told off into two columns; the first, known as the Lingtu column, was to consist of two guns of the Mountain Battery, under Major Keith, R.A.; one company of the Derbyshire Regiment under Captain Wyllly, and 300 of the 32nd Pioneers under Sir B. Bromhead. There were also another 300 of the 32nd Pioneers in advance at a place called Rongli Chu, some sixteen miles along the Lingtu road, who had been sent on to improve the road and camps. The Lingtu column was commanded by General Graham in person, and he had his staff and the political officers with him. This column was to move on to Lingtu direct, drive out the Thibetans, and effect its occupation.

The second column was known as the Intchi column, and was commanded by Colonel Mitchell, of the 13th Native Infantry, an officer who had been all over this country before and knew a considerable deal about it and its people. The Intchi column consisted of two guns mountain artillery under Lieutenant Phillips, one company Derbyshire Regiment under Captain Gosset, and 300 of the 13th Native Infantry, and was to be held in readiness to move on Intchi, or elsewhere as ordered. The other half of the 13th Native Infantry were to remain at Padong as a reserve and guard over stores, &c.

All hands were eager for the morrow, when we were to leave British territory, and soon come in contact with the enemy. Many were the rumours of the force in front of us, and from the native reports we were led to expect considerable resistance, so the prospect of a fight seemed hopeful. The Thibetans were also said to be adepts at pitfalls, surprises, and what were commonly called by the men booby traps; and we heard that masses of stone were prepared to be let down on our luckless heads on every possible occasion, together with carefully-prepared and covered pitfalls filled with pointed bamboos. However, these trifles did not trouble us

at all, our only regret being that both companies of the Derbys were not with the Lingtu column, which would probably see most of the fighting, if any, about which some people seemed to be sceptical.

CHAPTER III.

Advance on Lingtu—Action of Jeluksoo—Assault and Capture of Lingtu.

Our first march into the enemy's country commenced on the 16th of March, when we had a short march of about eight miles to Rhenok ridge, on the opposite side of the valley to Padong. The first part of the road for about three miles consisted of a steep descent to the river Rushett, 2000 feet above sea level, which forms the boundary between British and Independent Sikkim. The road had been made as far as the river, being from thence onward a mere track through the jungle, and very steep and difficult for the transport in places. The order of the march was:—G Company of the Derbys leading as an advance guard, followed by the two mountain guns with the remainder of the troops and transport bringing up the rear. Having, however, 300 of the Pioneers some distance ahead of us, any great precautions were unnecessary. There was a rickety bridge over the Rushett by which the infantry could cross, the artillery and transport having to ford it a short way up. These hill rivers are lovely streams at this season, with beautiful pools of the clearest water, full of fish, and babbling between huge boulders, and surrounded by the most enchanting exotic vegetation. They are, however, liable to very sudden rises on any rain falling, and soon become impassable torrents, very dangerous to travellers.

We had a steepish climb to the top of Rhenok ridge, 5000 feet above sea level, the difference in the road in our territory and in native Sikkim being most marked. We arrived in good time at our camping

ground on the ridge, and the transport being well up, we soon had the tents pitched. It is impossible to dress tents in most places in the hills, and one generally has to pitch them wherever you can find a small flat piece of ground big enough to hold them, and as often as not having to cut away the hill side to make a place for them. The village of Rhenok, from which the ridge is named, is about two miles below the camp, and at it the road branches off to Intchi and Tumlong, the capital of Sikkim. In the afternoon the Phodong Lama, one of the leading men of the popular party in Sikkim, and friendly to us, came in with a motley retinue of attendants armed with bows and arrows and short swords, to interview the General. He had a long consultation with him, and with Mr. Paul, Deputy-Commissioner of Darjeeling, and Political Officer with the Expeditionary Force. The purport of the interview seemed to be, that the Thibetans were in far greater strength than was generally supposed, and that a large force was awaiting us at Lingtu, while another party, estimated at 700 men, was marching round our left upon Intchi to cut in on our flank and threaten our line of communication.

On this the signallers of the Derbyshire Regiment were set to work, and the Intchi column we had left at Padong was ordered to move the next day to Rhenok Bazaar, which is the junction of the roads leading to Intchi and Lingtu.

On the 17th March we continued our advance a short distance of six miles, down hill all the way, to a camp called Rongli Chu, on the banks of a river of that name which rises somewhere near Lingtu. We found 200 of the Pioneers here, and they had built a stockade of bamboos round the camp, and had also made a rough bridge over the river.

This camp was only 2500 feet above sea level, and we found it somewhat warm and muggy, as it was very enclosed by precipitous hills, most densely clad

with bamboo jungle. The Rongli river has an evil reputation for sudden floods, and much loss to traders, both of life and goods, is said to occur here. A party of the Pioneers was to be left here, to make a more substantial bridge than the present temporary one. All the mule drivers and native followers were much alarmed at this place owing to one of the former being found a short distance from camp hung by the neck to a clump of bamboos. It was tolerably certain, however, that he must have committed suicide, as money was found on him, though as *felo de se* is uncommon amongst natives of his class his companions said it was done by the enemy, and were nervous accordingly.

On the 18th March we advanced to the next camp, called Lingtam, distance nine miles. We usually marched off about eight in the morning, to enable the men to get a good meal before starting. From Rongli the road climbs up a steep hill till the crest is crossed at 5700 feet, and then drops sharply down to the Lingtam stream, 1500 feet below. This march was a severe one, the road being very steep and tortuous, and in execrable repair. Two mules were killed by falling over the khud—fortunately not belonging to our transport, our mules having so far done very well. We were quite in the wilds here, the country round being almost totally uninhabited. A few clearings are made occasionally, by the natives cutting down the smaller trees and vegetation on the hill side, and after it is dried sufficiently they set fire to it, and then sow Indian corn on the space thus cleared. No further cultivation is required, as owing to the richness of the soil a heavy crop soon springs up and is harvested, the operation being repeated elsewhere next year.

Our camping ground at Lingtam is in a hollow, the jungle having been cut down to clear a space for the tents. The camp was not a very safe one, being commanded at close quarters on three sides; and as we

were now nearing Lingtu, and expected to come in contact with the enemy to-morrow or the next day, picquets were carefully placed round the camp day and night, to guard it against being rushed. Fortunately for us, our foes are not provided with arms of precision, or they would make it warm for us in some of these hill camps. Some 300 of the Pioneers are still ahead of us a few miles, improving the road, but to-morrow we shall close up on to them.

March 19th.—We were relieved in the morning at having had a peaceful night to get away from this *cul de sac* of a camp. We heard that the Pioneers, who were at Keulakha, three or four miles ahead, had seen some Thibetans. It would have been quite possible for them to have taken us at a disadvantage at Lingtam camp, for although we had taken every precaution, it was a position that could not be made much of from a defensive point of view.

The march to-day was to Phedomchen, about eight miles. On leaving Lingtam the first two miles is a steep ascent, and then a drop of 2000 feet to Keulakha, where the Pioneers had been encamped on the previous night, and whose rear guard we caught up as it was moving off. On the road side we passed an inscription on the rock in English, Hindustani, and Thibetan, stating that the present Secretary to the Bengal Government had trod that path on the 8th of January, 1866. After leaving Keulakha, we had a steep ascent all the way to Phedomchen, which is 7200 feet high. We were delayed on the road by a tree, felled across the road by the Thibetans, the first visual evidence we had of them. The road to-day was very sticky and slippery with wet clay, through a forest of large evergreen oak trees, covered with moss and orchids, with here and there a magnolia tree, with its pure white flowers in full bloom. Some of the orchids too were also in flower, and were very beautiful. We found Phedomchen the best camping ground we had come to, being a compact and level

piece of ground, with a spring close by, and which just held the force comfortably, for we now had all the Pioneers with us.

The General and staff, with an escort of thirty Pioneers, moved forward up the Lingtu road in the afternoon, to reconnoitre. After proceeding about three miles, at a place named Jeluksoo they were suddenly fired into from a stockade commanding the path and completely concealed in the jungle. It seemed pretty lucky nobody was hit, as fire was opened at close quarters. As it was late in the afternoon and the strength of the enemy was not known, while our force on the spot was weak, it was deemed advisable to retire to camp and attack the stockade the next morning with a larger force, when a further advance could be made on Lingtu twelve miles up the hill. This, after a few shots being returned by our side, was done.

Two picquets and several guards were posted round the camp. In the evening a good many woodcock were noticed flying over the camp, though of course no shooting was allowed; but future visions of woodcock on toast were duly registered in our minds when opportunity would permit.

March 20th.—The night passed quietly, and after a good breakfast we paraded at 7 a.m., leaving our camp standing. Our small force, of G Company Derbyshire Regiment, 80 rifles, under Captain Wyllly, with Lieutenants Bowman and Iggulden, and 100 Pioneers under Colonel Bromhead, Captain Lumsden, and Lieutenant Tytler, the whole being under General Graham, proceeded to march up the path to turn the enemy out of their stockade.

The Lingtu road, or path, as indeed all tracks in these mountains, only admit of men going in single file, and the Pioneers led off in that formation, followed by the Derbys. After proceeding with the utmost caution up the Lingtu road for about one and a-half hours, and covering about three miles, the

stockade was again arrived at, and the peculiar jackal war cry of the Thibetans was heard, together with the discharge of their matchlocks, and the shooting of a stray arrow or two through the branches of the trees.

The enemies' stockade was found to occupy the crest of a steep wooded hill, immediately to our front, round the left of which the road made a sharp turn, past the corner of it, over a steep bit of bamboo-clad khud. The road had been completely cut away for some fifty yards in front of this corner, and there were a couple of stone sangars enfilading it, which made any attempt to advance by the road impossible. The stockade was a stoutly made concern of tree trunks interlaced with one another, and abattis of fallen trees and jungle in front of it. Altogether the position was a very well-chosen one for defence, the only mistake the enemy made being in not clearing a sufficient field of fire in front of it.

On fire being opened at 8.30 a.m. every one closed up to the front as much as possible, and our long caterpillar formation was reduced as much as circumstances permitted. The Pioneers under Colonel Bromhead dashed at the stockade in front, together with No. 1 section G Company Derbys under Captain Wyllly, and the firing was soon general, our men struggling on up the hill with fixed bayonets over slippery tree trunks and through bushes and bamboos, firing away as they went, and eagerly pushing on to get to close quarters and use their bayonets.

The Thibetans had several men in the trees above the stockade, and arrows were dropping about everywhere, but harmlessly, the bow-and-arrow man being at a disadvantage in this enclosed country. After some faint resistance, the stockade in front was carried and the enemy from that part of the position retreated, leaving a few dead men behind them, Colour-Sergeant Collins, of G Company, having bayoneted one or two, and Corporal McCullough,

also of G Company, captured the only prisoner taken. The flying Thibetans were hotly pursued by Captain Wyllly and No. 1 section, and some of the Pioneers, but our men were faster on their legs than the natives, and soon got some way ahead.

In the meantime about thirty Pioneers, under Captain Lumsden, had advanced along the road to the left, and finding it cut away, were unable to get along it, the Thibetans sticking to their stone sangars and keeping up a heavy fire with their matchlocks, and also sending showers of arrows. Captain Lumsden was shot through the arm in leading his men on, and one or two of the sepoys were hit by arrows.

As the sepoys could not get along the road, the General, who was watching the fight, ordered Lieutenant Iggulden, with a section of G Company Derbyshire Regiment, to try and get above and behind the sangars, where the Thibetans were still firing.

After a stiff climb over mossy rocks, and through dense smoke which hung in the bamboos, Lieutenant Iggulden led his men to a position over the sangars, where he was fired at from a few yards by a Thibetan behind a tree, having a very narrow escape: he, however, rushed forward, shot his assailant in the back as he turned to flee, sending him headlong into the road below, and soon had his men firing from above and behind into the sangar on the road, at a few yards distance, upon which the Thibetans hurriedly fled, leaving several dead; a good many more plunged into the jungle below, badly wounded. The Thibetans at the sangar, finding our men behind them, fled precipitately straight down the hill-side, where we could not follow them, leaving their arms and weapons behind them at the sangar. These the Derbys collected, and after calling on the Pioneers to cease firing into the sangar, which they were still blazing at, a further advance along the road was made to Jeluksoo, where the two sections of G

Company joined hands, and were joined by the half company in reserve, under Lieutenant Bowman.

Jeluksoo was an open piece of ground forming a col, where the Thibetans had encamped; for we found two tents and a shanty, and a fair lot of provisions, cooking utensils, blankets, &c., here. Soon after arriving at this place, Captain Wyllly and Corporal McCullough came back from the opposite direction, having followed the enemy some way alone, and getting separated from the remainder of the company in the thick jungle.

The enemy had broken in every direction, leaving about half-a-dozen killed on the field. They had, however, managed to carry off into the jungle all their wounded. The dead found on the field were evidently pure Thibetans, of a fair complexion, and fine big men. After seeing that every one was present, having no casualties, and a rest of about twenty minutes, it still being only about midday, the Derbys, with the rest of the force, marched onwards up the hill towards Lingtu. The road became very steep, with snow in the sheltered spots, and for at least a mile, was strewn with arms, blankets, and clothing, with pools of blood all along it, showing that a good many wounded must have been carried off that way towards Lingtu.

We were now getting to a considerable elevation, and were a good deal troubled with shortness of breath, and the exertion of climbing up a path, more resembling rough steps, with a rifle and ammunition, necessitated frequent halts to recover our wind.

We had now left behind the oak trees, and ascended through rhododendron forest, many of the trees of which were a mass of colour in full bloom. After proceeding about three miles we reached a neck of land called Garnei, about 11,000 feet high, where a halt was made, as we had got in the clouds, and all view, to a further distance than twenty yards or so, was obscured. We waited some time for the mist to

clear, which it did not, and as it was past 2 p.m., the General did not deem it advisable to attack Lingtu at once. The ground all round was covered with snow and it was very cold.

The Pioneers were therefore ordered to remain at Garnei for the night and bivouac, while G Company Derbys bivouacked at the Thibetan camp below at Jeluksoo, where the two mountain guns had also arrived; but as yet there was no sign of our own baggage coming up. At about 4 p.m. it came on to sleet and drizzle, and as we were 9600 feet high, we began to feel the cold considerably, for we had no great coats with us and there was very little cover to be obtained. At about dusk a little of our baggage arrived and three or four tents were got up. Everybody was feeling dead tired, as we had been on our legs since six in the morning, with nothing to eat, except what we had brought with us, which was not much, as we had expected to return to camp by the evening.

A search party was sent to look for the missing baggage at 9 p.m., and found the mules blocked on the road about a mile back unable to get on, six or seven of them having fallen over the khud with their loads, so they had to return, and we had to bivouac as best we could for the night. Most of the men had to go without blankets or cover of any sort, and we all had a most miserable and cold night. Fires were made and we tried to sleep by them, but whilst one side got tolerably warm the other got bitterly cold, rendering sleep out of the question.

March 21st.—The first streaks of dawn were welcomed by every one, with the prospects of getting the baggage in, and obtaining some food. As soon as it was light enough to see, Lieutenant Iggulden went with a fatigue party fully armed back to where the baggage was on the road, and found all the mules and kit huddled together at the sangar on the road where the fight had taken place. Two of our mules were dead down the khud, which was very steep at that

place, and six more mules that had tumbled down the hill side, were recovered at distances from 200 to 500 feet down, seemingly not much the worse for their fall; though how they survived goodness only knows. The temporary road here was very bad, and with difficulty passable, and our party had to carry the baggage some fifty yards over the worst part of it; this, and recovering the mules from down the khud, occupied some time, and necessitated a good deal of hard labour. However, after herculean efforts, all the baggage arrived at Jeluksoo at eight a.m., and the Derbys had their breakfast, and got on their warm coats, as we had no intention of again experiencing the cold and discomforts of last night.

At ten a.m., after having packed up everything, and fortified the inner man with a substantial breakfast, G Company moved off to Garnei; the two guns of the Mountain Battery having preceded us.

As G Company had been promised the honour of leading the assault at Lingtu, every one was as keen as mustard to get there as soon as possible. Arrived at Garnei, we found the Pioneers under Colonel Bromhead drawn up, with the two guns in position ready to open fire. As usual, however, up here clouds and heavy mist obscured everything to within a few yards distance, so the guns were unable to come into action.

After waiting for a quarter of an hour, the weather showing no signs of improvement, the Derbys and the Pioneers received orders to advance on the fort. We therefore advanced very carefully, as the ground in front could not be seen, and from the news we had received we were led to expect that great masses of stone were ready to be let down on our heads.

The road up from Garnei was a mere track through deep snow, some two feet of it covering the ground, and in many places where it had drifted, it was several feet in depth. After a long and fatiguing climb (as one very soon gets blown

at this elevation) we reached a spot which we calculated must be pretty near the wall of the fort, and G Company got orders to move to the left up a spur of the hill, whilst the Pioneers kept to the track. We now had to plod through the snow up to our knees, and had a hard struggle to get through. After we had had about twenty minutes of this sort of work, the walls of the fort towered immediately in front of us about 300 yards off, and at the same time we heard the bugles of the Pioneers sounding the charge. As the gate was open we darted through it with a cheer immediately on the heels of the Pioneers, who had the best of us and got in first, coming as they did by the road; but we found the fort deserted and the Thibetans in full flight across the Jelapla pass twelve miles off, leaving little or nothing behind them.

After assuring ourselves no enemy was near, we formed up, arms were piled, and a guard being placed, the men were allowed to fall out to look about them and hunt for loot. Of course one of our first acts was to plant G Company's flag in a commanding position on the fort walls together with the Union Jack, and to haul down the prayer rags and poles of the Thibetans. We found the fortification at Lingtu to consist of a wall about 300 yards long, from eight to ten feet high, and five feet thick, built of large stones and roughly loop-holed. It was protected on each flank by a round tower about twenty feet high, and loop-holed, and was built along the crest of the Lingtu peak. The left flank was secure owing to a precipice. The right flank was practicable, but with difficulty, as the hill side was very steep and covered with rough boulders. The road or path led up to a large gate, which was situated towards the left centre of the wall, and there was also a stone block house commanding the road some 400 feet below the wall.

We did not think we should have had much difficulty in storming the place, as the wall was everywhere climbable, and the loop-holes were very

badly placed, though it is doubtful if our mountain guns could have assisted us by doing any harm to so thick and massive a wall.

As it was, it certainly was not nearly as strong a position as the stockade at Jeluksoo, which was an admirably chosen one for defence, their only mistake being in not having cleared the jungle in front sufficiently, and so obtaining a good field of fire.

After all the trouble they had taken in building Lingtu, it was a great surprise to us, and disappointment too, that they had not made some sort of stand there.

We found lots of rocks placed over the pathway, near Lingtu, ready to be rolled on our heads as we came up, but none of them had been fired off; the rout of yesterday at Jeluksoo having been too much for the enemy's nerves. There was a good-sized square building, some eighty yards behind the wall on the reverse side of the hill, made of stone and roofed with rough pine planks, forming a sort of serai. In this there was just room for ourselves and the Pioneers, and we made ourselves as comfortable as we could in it. It was very cold and uncomfortable, and we were nearly suffocated by smoke from the fires, there being no chimneys; but it was better than bivouacking in the open, as here we were 12,600 feet high, and above snow level.

Our baggage arrived very late, and a great deal of it missing, as over twenty mules had slipped into the snow drifts and down the khud. However, we were better off than on the previous night, and got some food and were fairly warm for the night. We found nothing of value at Lingtu, the Thibetans having carried everything away, except forty or fifty loads of tobacco leaf, wool, copper sheeting, and iron pans. These articles, being unportable, were of no value to us, though, I believe, in Thibet their money value would have been pretty considerable. We had a guard put on the two gates of the building we were

in, and a patrol of Native Infantry was sent out every hour to see that all was clear; the rest of us turning in to get as much sleep as was possible under the circumstances.

Thus ended the first phase of the Sikkim Expedition, which had carried out its instructions to the letter, without loss of life on our side. We had commenced our march at sea level, and here we were 12,600 feet; higher than the troops of any other nation had ever operated in. "What will be done next?" was the question every one wanted answered.

The road between Lingtu and the Jelapla Pass, which is the boundary between Sikkim and Thibet, was several feet deep in snow, and yet, if any permanent good was to result from the expedition, a display of force must be made on the border, and a column must advance to the very frontier of Thibet. At present here we remained in the snows, at a loss what next to do. From information taken from prisoners and a few villagers who had remained at Lingtu, it appeared that the garrison of Lingtu left as soon as they heard that their friends below had been beaten. They had understood that the troops moving against them were Darjeeling policemen, but having discovered their mistake, they thought discretion the better part of valour, and made off to their own territory across the Jelapla, fourteen miles off, which accounted for there being no garrison at Lingtu to resist us.

The following despatch from Captain Wylly to the Officer Commanding the Derbyshire Regiment on this first phase of the operations speaks for itself:

"*From* The Officer Commanding Detachment 2nd Derbyshire Regiment.

"*To* The Officer Commanding 2nd Derbyshire Regiment, Dum Dum.

"Dated Lingtu, Sikkim, 10th April, 1888.

"Sir,

"In forwarding sheets of the detachment diary up to date, I have judged it expedient to furnish you at the same

time with a report of the events of the 20th and 21st March, similar to that furnished by order to the Officer Commanding the Expeditionary Force.

"20th March. On the morning of 20th ultimo the company under my immediate command paraded at 7 a.m., strength 80 of all ranks, and moved in support of a party of the 32nd Pioneers, to help in dislodging the enemy, said to be holding in force a strong stockade at Jeluksoo, some four miles distant, on the road to Lingtu. After proceeding for an hour and a half up a very steep road, we heard firing in our immediate front, and were ordered to halt beneath a high bank, below which the road made a sharp turn to the left, and upon which we afterwards learnt the stockade was placed. Slugs and arrows came close over our heads, and the enemy appearing to stand firmer than was expected, a section of my company was ordered up, and climbed into the stockade as the enemy, pursued by the Pioneers, left it by the rear. Part of the section pursued, and the remainder, wheeling sharply to the left, joined another section under Lieutenant Iggulden, which had mounted the hill above the road, and these charged down with the bayonet upon a body of men still holding the sangar dominating the road. The enemy now fled at all points, and the column being re-formed, advanced to Garnei, a spur or ridge immediately below the fort at Lingtu. The 32nd Pioneers remained here, while the detachment returned to Jeluksoo, and here passed the night, many tents being deficient, and a large number of men having no coats and no blankets, owing to the baggage not getting past the point where the road had been cut by the enemy at the sangar. As the men were all in khaki, had not tasted food since daybreak, and the elevation of Jeluksoo is some 9000 feet, it will be understood that the men suffered some hardship, which was, however, borne without complaint.

"21st March. On the morning following, the detachment, strength ninety of all ranks, marched off at 9.30 a.m., and proceeded to Garnei. Leaving here at 11.30 in dense mist, we advanced with all caution up a very steep path in the snow, preceded by a very small party of the Pioneers to clear any obstructions away. Having advanced in this way for nearly an hour, we were ordered to turn off to the left up a very steep trackless slope, and in snow often up to the waist. The company advanced in sections led by Lieutenant Bowman, and we presently heard the Thibetans' war cry, and the Pioneer bugles sounding the charge, but we could still see nothing owing to the dense mist. Our leading section now pushed on with such expedition that it entered the now empty fort close upon the heels of the Pioneer advanced party, who had throughout kept the road.

"I have brought to the notice of the Officer Commanding the Sikkim Expeditionary Force the services of Colour-Sergeant Collins and of Lance-Sergeant McCullough. The former has rendered me the most valuable service throughout, and has by his example and bearing done much to keep the men in good fettle and contented. He also rendered Lieutenant Iggulden much service in the sangar on the 20th ultimo.

"Lance-Sergeant McCullough is always first whenever there is work or fatigue to be done. He had been on advanced picquet the whole night prior to the 20th, he was the first of our party into the stockade, joined in the pursuit and took the only prisoner taken at Jeluksoo. It will, I am sure, be to you, as it is to me, a matter of the utmost gratification that since the commencement of the operations, General Graham has been loud in praise of the appearance and conduct of the men composing the detachment, and never fails to express his confidence in them, and his appreciation of the work they have done.

"I have the honour to be, Sir, your most obedient servant,

"(Sd.) HAROLD WYLLY, Captain.

"Commanding Detachment Derbyshire Regiment."

During this time the Intchi column had been having an unexciting time, camped at Rhenok. The rumours of a force of Thibetans approaching from that direction were ill-founded, and although the country towards Intchi and Tumlong was reconnoitred no trace of an enemy was found, so that they passed an uneventful time making roads, building bamboo huts and furniture, and anxiously awaiting the news from Lingtu; H Company under Captain Gosset being much chagrined at not being up at the front with the Lingtu column.

We were much gratified at receiving the congratulations of the Commander-in-Chief on the success of the operations so far.

CHAPTER IV.

Life at Lingtu—Move to Gnatong—Build a defensive post—
H Company arrives—Forest clearing and daily routine—
Reconnaissance—Signs of activity amongst the Thibetans.

OUR first night at Lingtu cannot be said to have been a very comfortable one, what with smoky attempts to keep ourselves warm and freezing draughts, so that we were glad to turn out at the first streak of dawn the next day, and find a clear morning, with a wonderful view all around us. Eternal snow surrounded us on three sides, with ranges of lofty, rugged, snow-capped mountains stretching in all directions except the south. Conspicuous amongst these masses of snow, and looking comparatively close, towered the glorious peak of Kinchinjunga, over 28,000 feet high, with its 20,000 feet of glittering glaciers and dazzling snow bathed in the bright morning sun. It was a wonderful scene, and held one spell-bound for some minutes admiring the vastness and beauty of the perfectly still, white landscape. We had not much time, however, for admiring scenery, as at about 8 a.m. the clouds rise from the dank valleys beneath and soon obscure the view, besides which the bitter, keen wind blowing straight from the snows soon drives us to action. The wag of the Company remarked on turning out this morning, and beholding a view he could never even have dreamed of, "Ah! looks pretty, don't it?—as if them Pioneers had been whitewashing!"—which is a way of admiring the snows which would not have occurred to every one.

As our stay at this place may be of some duration, the first thing to be done was to clean out the

building we should have to live in, which was choked up with twelve months' or more accumulated Thibetan filth, and let me here say that the Thibetan will yield the palm for personal dirtiness and filthiness to no human being in the wide world.

A fatigue party with mules was also despatched to search the snow-drifts for the kit which tumbled down the khud yesterday. Another fatigue party is busy clearing away the snow, which is very deep all round, and making paths and communications about. So that during the morning we are busily employed and hard at work. In the afternoon all hands are employed pulling down the wall along the crest of the hill. Lieutenant Iggulden also took a few men for a short reconnaissance towards the Jelapla Pass, but did not proceed more than a couple of miles over heavy snow, finding a few bales of tobacco, scrap iron, and copper sheeting by the way, which the Thibetans had been unable to carry off.

As the snow was still far too deep to attempt an advance to the Jelapla Pass, which is between 14,000 and 15,000 feet high and distant about twelve miles, there appeared to be nothing else to do but remain where we were until the true state of mind of the Thibetans could be ascertained, and permanent promise to behave themselves obtained from them. For the present they had retired into their own country beyond the Jelapla Pass, from whence during the next six weeks various rumours of their doings or intentions of the vaguest description from time to time arrived.

The detachment Derbyshire Regiment had, therefore, the prospect of a summer in the hills before them, and as it does not often fall to the lot of Thomas Atkins to pass his time at an elevation of over 12,000 feet above sea level, I will describe the daily life we led after taking Lingtu, until further advances by the Thibetans led to more stirring operations.

March 23rd.—We spend the time in making our quarters more habitable. Some of the Pioneers go out under canvas, which gives us more room, the guns move back to Phedomchen, this place being too trying for the mules, and there being a difficulty in obtaining fodder for them, as there are no bamboos at this height. Bamboo leaves are given to all mules and ponies up here instead of grass, and it makes most excellent fodder, every bit as good as grass. Lingtu is a great place for snowstorms at this time of the year, and for the next week or ten days they are of daily occurrence. Two of our mules died of cold the second night we were at Lingtu, so the remainder were sent down to Jeluksoo, which is 3500 feet lower down and about five miles by road.

On a clear day we can see Darjeeling clearly, as well as the Jelapla Pass. Captain Foulerton, of the 100th Regiment, arrives as signalling officer, and we are able to "helio" messages in to our friends at Darjeeling when the clouds permit.

All our men were now served out with a pair of blue goggles apiece, as a precaution against snow blindness. This is a very necessary precaution too, as the reflection of the sun's rays off the snow is most dazzling, and produces snow blindness in a very short time. The natives of Thibet suffer a good deal from snow blindness, and when not able to get coloured glass goggles make spectacles out of fine hair netting, and if not able to get either of these they paint the eye-lids and cheeks round the eyes black, which they say prevents snow blindness to a great extent. Snow blindness is a very painful thing, and there is nothing that makes one's face so raw and makes the skin peel off more than marching over snow in a bright sun; this, combined with a cutting cold wind, made us all look in a short time as if we had had our faces boiled, and many were the times the skin of our faces and noses peeled during the next few months. As the spring was advancing, and on the snow clearing off

from Lingtu we should be without water on this peak, the General intended to move about five miles on to a place called Gnatong, which was situated on a ridge in an open valley with running streams of water on both sides, and was a more sheltered spot than Lingtu and about 500 feet lower.

On the 26th March the Political Officer, Mr. Paul, with an escort of twenty-five Derbys under Lieutenant Iggulden, visited Gnatong, but found the road still very difficult, and had to march over deep snow all the way. As we should still have to wait some days before we could entrench ourselves at Gnatong, General Graham sent all the troops down to Phedomchen, with the exception of G Company Derbyshire Regiment, with fifty Pioneers under Lieutenant Tytler, who remained at Lingtu. The remainder of the Pioneers were at this time busily engaged in improving the road up to Lingtu, which sadly stood in need of it.

On March 30th Lingtu was visited in the evening by a very violent thunderstorm, accompanied by most terrific thunder, lightning, and hail, some of the latter being two to three inches in diameter. The sentries had a bad time of it, and three of the sepoys of the 32nd Pioneers were struck by lightning and were frightfully burnt, looking as if they had a red hot iron passed down their backs and sides. It is a wonder they were not killed outright.

The whole of the Lingtu fort had now been demolished, and nothing now remained of the boasted Thibetan stronghold on Lingtu peak but a pole proudly flying the Union Jack of Old England.

Supplies had been coming in pretty regularly, and an enterprising native had come in with half a dozen mule loads of coffee shop stores for Tommy, so we had nothing to complain of in the way of grub.

The death roll on the enemy's side at Jeluksoo turned out to be far heavier than was at first supposed. Only about half a dozen were found on the field after

the stockade and sangars at Jeluksoo had been taken, but it was known that many had fled badly wounded into the adjacent dense jungle. A horrible jungle it was too, where a wounded man might have lain for weeks and died within a few yards of the road, being slowly devoured by leeches, which simply swarm up to a certain elevation in Sikkim. Every day bodies are being found in the khud round about Jeluksoo, and the death roll is mounting up, and rumour has it that the Gyakpen, or commander of Jeluksoo, and about forty of his men are still unaccounted for. Captain Lumsden and the four sepoy who were wounded on our side are all doing well.

April 3rd. The snow line is gradually descending, as although we have snow storms at night, it melts in the day, and wild flowers, and a pretty mauve primula, are beginning to show themselves in the more sunny spots.

Captain Wyllly and thirty of our men with the General reconnoitred on 3rd April as far as the Tukola Pass, which is some two miles beyond Gnatong, and 13,500 feet high, and from which a good view of the Jelapla is obtained. They saw several Thibetans on the Jelapla Pass through their glasses, so that it is evidently occupied. We also hear rumours of the gathering of a large force of Thibetans in the Chumbi Valley, who send messages that they are going to sweep us down to Calcutta, but, as Tommy Atkins remarks, "We have come a long way to Sikkim (seek 'em), but have not found 'em yet," and we fear we shall not if Government won't allow us to enter Thibet. However, as the rumours of a Thibetan force being on the other side of the border are pretty well authenticated, 200 of the Pioneers are moved up and posted at a place called Shalambi, half-way to Gnatong, to make the road, preparatory to our all moving to the latter place as soon as the snow permits.

We manage to get a few moonal and blood

pheasants, but game cannot be said to be plentiful at all. Tracks have also been seen of serow and musk deer.

On 6th April General Graham and staff, with an escort of thirty rifles of the Derbys, under Lieutenant Bowman, go to Gnatong to mark out a site for an entrenched encampment. The road between Lingtu and Gnatong has been considerably improved and cleared of snow, so for the next few days we march backwards and forwards, spending some six hours a day in completing a stone and turf wall round the site marked out for the camp.

The camp at Gnatong is situated on a sloping spur between two valleys, that on the north-west side being the main one, and from the ridge of the camp to the bottom of the valley the ground has a steep descent. The valley on the east side is wider and not much below the camp, and has a good deal of open ground about it. Above the camp, on the north side, is a wooded hill, christened "Woodcock Hill." The hills all round are fairly wooded with a species of tall fir tree, while the higher and more exposed portions are covered with a dwarf rhododendron of several species, which forms an impenetrable thicket in places.

The camp was perhaps the best that could be chosen under the circumstances, and was a less exposed and more genial and sheltered place than Lingtu, but as a defensive position it had many weak points. It was commanded on three sides by rifle-fire to within a few hundred yards, and from the formation of the ground, our lines of communication were liable to be cut off. However, the Thibetans, fortunately for us, were not well armed and had no great notions of strategy, so that the risks of a reverse were minimised. The one drawback to Gnatong, at this time, was the scarcity of forage for the mules, which had to be brought up from a distance of two marches.

On April 12th we packed up our kit and conveyed

all our belongings from Lingtu to Gnatong, which was now ready for occupation. The two guns had also arrived, so we were a compact little force. A stone and turf wall had been built round the camp, protected by a strong abattis of rhododendron, made on the most approved style, and quite calculated to stop any sudden rush of Thibetans should they attempt such a thing.

For the next week the time was busily passed in reconnoitring, cutting down trees round the camp, so as to obtain a clear field of fire, and in improving our defences generally. We were, however, much hampered by snow, which fell most persistently every night for about two or three hours, covering the ground to a foot or eighteen inches. This had to be cleared out of camp the next morning, and as the snow melted in the day time, we lived in a continual state of slush, dampness, and discomfort. Many ridge poles of our tents were broken by the weight of the snow, which we found by experience could only be prevented by sending round a fatigue party every half hour whilst the snowstorms lasted, to beat the snow off the tents. These snowstorms were always accompanied by the most terrific crashes of thunder and blinding lightning, and used to regularly come on at the same time every night, at about nine p.m., and last for a couple of hours.

We had daily rumours at this time of an intended attack by the Thibetans, who had been observing our movements, some of them having been seen every day by our reconnoitring parties.

Of course, all this time, no military precautions to guard against surprise were neglected, and reconnoitring parties were out by day and picquets posted by night. These duties, owing to the climate and snow, were by no means light, and to tramp round a circle of picquets twice a night up and down steep hills, with snow at times up to one's knees, was trying work.

Every one, however, was wonderfully fit, and the spirit and cheerfulness of the men, through all these hardships, left nothing to be desired. I think we all worked so hard that we had not much time to think, though later in the year, as time went on, we chafed a little at the long months of inaction.

On April 18th an attempt was made to reconnoitre in force as far as the Jelapla Pass, and G Company Derbys, and fifty Pioneers and two guns were the force told off for the work. However, on reaching the Tukola, the pass above Gnatong, and some two miles from it, it became so dense and misty that, after waiting some time for the clouds to roll by, it was decided to return to camp and try again the next day. Accordingly, on the 19th April a start was made at nine a.m., and after one and a-half hours' climb the Tukola Pass was reached. From there we made a slight descent along the south side of the ridge, and ascended again to the Nimla Pass, which is about the same height as the Tukola. From the Nimla the road descends about 1500 feet to Kupup, which is at the mouth of the gorge leading to the Jelapla Pass, and some three miles from the top of the pass. There is a fine lake called Bidong Cho below the Nimla Pass at the bottom of the valley, almost a mile in length.

On reaching the Nimla, Captain Wyly and fifty men with the guns and Pioneers descended to Kupup. Lieutenant Temple and a signalling party were sent off to the right, and Lieutenant Iggulden and thirty men made a detour round by the left, accompanied by the D.A.A.G. to the force, Captain Travers.

Captain Wyly's party came on about twenty Thibetans at the mouth of the Jelap gorge, with whom they exchanged shots, the Thibetans retiring towards the pass. Some more Thibetans were observed 1000 yards up the pass. Lieutenant Iggulden's party meanwhile worked round, getting a fine view of the Jelapla Pass, and descending opposite

Kupup, joined hands with the main body and Captain Wyllly.

As it was getting on in the afternoon, we returned to Gnatong at about four p.m., but not before we had seen a large number of Thibetans, well over a hundred, appear on the top of the Jelap Pass, evidently turned out by the firing. We were much delighted to hear in the evening that H Company was being telegraphed for, and would, therefore, arrive in a few days, and the two companies of the Derbys would then be together again.

The reconnaissance of to-day seems to prove that the expedition cannot end with the capture of Fort Lingtu. In the orders of the Government of India issued for the expedition, it was distinctly laid down that, if necessary for the sake of effect, the force might proceed as far as the Jelap Pass, but was on no account to cross the frontier into the Chumbi Valley and beyond, unless it were attacked and it was necessary to pursue. From to-day's operations, however, it appears that we shall most certainly have to fight the Thibetans again in order to arrive at our frontier boundary, and in that case it is to be hoped the bugbear of China will be shelved, and we shall be allowed to pursue the Thibetans into the Forbidden Land. From present conjectures, there seems to be no doubt that the Thibetans hold the Jelapla Pass with a force at least numerically our equal, and how many more they have in the Chumbi Valley it is difficult to estimate with any certainty. Our Political Officer, Mr. Paul, assisted by a British-Sikkim official called the Tyndook, have spies across the frontier, but the news they occasionally bring is contradictory and mainly unreliable. The Government of India have, however, been communicated with, and in due time we shall see the outcome of their deliberations.

On the 26th April, H Company, under Captain Gosset, with Lieutenant Heyman, arrived at Gnatong after a very severe march, the road being reported in

a shocking state, and the mules falling with their loads every few hundred yards. They certainly had bad luck, as there was an unusually heavy fall of snow the night previous to their arrival, which made the roads almost impassable. The men received an additional issue of warm clothing in the shape of a Balaclava cap and a pair of mitts per man, for which every one was duly grateful.

Up to the end of April we continued to have bad weather, and the camp is a slough of despond. We have made stone and log paths all over it, to enable us to keep our feet dry, but we long for a few dry days, free from snow, to enable us to get things ship shape again. We find wood cutting a great amusement, and the Pioneers having got up a good supply of American axes, we are rapidly clearing the ground to a considerable distance from the fort. We have all along suffered from a dearth of tools, the regulation supply of miserable little shovels and picks we started with have long ago broken up, and were it not for the Pioneers, who have a good supply of tools, we should be unable to get much work done at all.

We keep our spirits up by sing-songs around the camp fire, and an occasional gymkhana when the weather permits, but to show the rigour of the climate, we lost some twenty head of cattle in three days from cold, and the remainder all had to be sent back, as it was found impossible to keep them here at present owing to the nightly snowfall.

A good many of our men suffered from toothache owing to the cold touching up bad teeth. But the medical department being unprovided with forceps any relief is unobtainable. The men have been getting a daily ration of one and a half drams of rum, whilst the Sikhs of the Pioneers get a dole of opium instead, which they say goes a long way towards keeping them fit and free from fever and ague.

CHAPTER V.

More waiting—Attack in force by Thibetans—Action of Gnatong
—Defeat and rout of Thibetan forces—Further inaction—
Profusion of wild flowers—Life in the monsoon—Reinforce-
ments ordered up.

WE had strong hopes that at the beginning of May we should be allowed to "go for" the Thibetans, and have no more nonsense about the matter, as the Lamas refused to come to terms, and here we were, within a few miles of one another, playing at the school boy game of "you hit me first, and then I'll give you beans." No such luck, however. The powers that were, ruled that we were on no account to unnecessarily attack the enemy who has invaded our country, and who continues to return impertinent messages to our overtures for an understanding. Moreover, we are forbidden to aggravate them unduly by approaching within three miles of our own frontier line on the Jelapla Pass, so that the foe, who has for eighteen months occupied our country, and who has retired with all speed before our small column, may now flourish his antiquated weapons and defy us to his heart's content on the top of the Jelapla Pass, secure in the edict issued by the Government of India that he is not on any account to be thwarted.

We have nothing to do, therefore, but possess our souls in patience and wait on the course of events, trusting for some climax to occur to put an end to the weary game of sitting still and doing nothing. Rumours came at the beginning of May that all British troops were to return to the plains, for which we were not sorry, as the prospect of further fighting seemed remote. These rumours never came to

anything, however, so we stood fast and spent our time in improving the camp, in making it stronger by building a stockade of logs properly loop-holed with two tiers of fire, by doubling the abattis and strengthening it with wire entanglements, improved drainage, further wood clearings, &c., &c. All these useful works, with daily reconnaissance, helped to pass away the time. Snow was of less frequent occurrence, but rain took its place, which in some respects was worse. The line of perpetual snow had at this time, by the middle of May, descended to about 14,000 feet, and everywhere on the sunny slopes was the most wonderful display of wild flowers, of an immense variety. We had about a dozen different sorts of rhododendrons and two kinds of azaleas which flowered profusely, besides very many small species of flowers, several of which were unknown to us. The purple flower of the deadly aconite was also common, from a concoction of which plant the Thibetans poison their arrows. There was also a species of rhubarb which grew at a very high altitude out of the snow in the form of a pyramid, looking in the distance like a yellow flame. Of animals this part of the country seems to be singularly deficient. There are a few common marmots and a tailless rat about, and traces are met of musk deer, serow, and leopards, but hardly one of these animals has been seen. Lieutenant Temple wounded a wolf one day, and Lieutenant Iggulden once met a snow leopard going the round of the picquets on a snowy night, which had no doubt been attracted by the offal thrown away from the camp.

About midnight on the 3rd of May we had an alarm, and thought at first that the Thibetans were on us, but it turned out to be only the tent of Lieutenant Tytler, of the Pioneers, which had caught fire and flared up in great style. Our men now got a dram of lime juice per diem to keep off scurvy, as

vegetables are scarce in these parts. They are wonderfully fit, and putting on flesh at an alarming rate, and, with their beards, would hardly have been recognisable by their comrades at Dum Dum.

On May 15th Lieutenant Heyman went out reconnoitring on the Nimla Pass, which is as far as we are allowed to go at present, and saw a considerable number of Thibetans at Kupup at the mouth of the Jelapla Pass. They fired some signal shots on seeing Heyman's party, when some more Thibetans turned out up the Pass.

We are fairly well off for supplies at Gnatong, and Captain Mansfield, our chief commissariat officer, has excellent transport arrangements. We also get good supplies of fresh butter and eggs, for which we pay one rupee four annas a seer, and eight annas a dozen respectively. Our comrades down the line, however, get these articles at less than half this price. When H Company were at Rhenok, the men found plenty of edible ferns and edible fungus. The former make a most excellent vegetable when properly cooked, being not unlike asparagus. You must be careful, however, that you do not get hold of the wrong sort of fern or fungus, or the results are rather deadly. Wild raspberries also abound at the lower elevations, and make capital jam. One of our sportsmen shot a doe musk deer about this time, the venison of which is very good eating. The male musk deer is very much sought after in these parts, for the sake of the musk pod it carries, and which is worth twenty rupees a pod, there being a large export of musk pods from Thibet to India. Some of the Sepoys also shot a small black bear, the only one which has been seen.

May 18th to May 20th.—We have the usual plethora of rain and hail. We manage to keep ourselves fairly dry and warm, though it is by no means pleasant being confined to our tents when raining, and everything gets very damp. A consign-

ment of new boots arrives for the Derbys, and not before they are wanted, as most of the present stock are completely worn out. Our warm jerseys, too, are a great comfort, and are capital things to work in. What we ought to have are corduroy breeches for the men, as we do a lot of navvying work up here, which khaki or cloth is hardly suited for.

There are several small wooden huts on the hills towards Kupup, which are more open and down like, and are now covered with luxuriant grass, and evidently the pasture lands of large herds of sheep and cattle in more peaceful times, and it is possible that the Thibetans may be anxious to keep these fine pastures in their possession more than anything else. At any rate, it is the only land here worth having, apparently.

On the 21st of May the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, Sir Steuart Bayley, arrived at about noon on a visit to Gnatong. A guard of honour of H Company Derbyshire Regiment, under Captain Gosset, was provided for him. He was much struck by the fine appearance of our men, and avowed they must be picked men, which they were not, though it must be said they looked a fine and large lot, their beards giving them a much older appearance than if they had been shaved. In the afternoon the Lieutenant-Governor had a fair sample of Gnatong weather, as it hailed hard for about four hours. We went to bed early as usual, having orders to provide an escort of fifty rifles to accompany the Lieutenant-Governor, who wished to go to the Nimla Pass early in the morning. Little we dreamed of what was going to happen.

May 22nd.—We were all astir pretty early, as we had expected to have a day out as escort to the Lieutenant-Governor, and reveille had hardly sounded at the first streak of dawn when Captain Travers, the D.A.A.G., came hurrying down to our part of the camp, which was the lower part of it, and told us to

turn out as sharp as possible and man the walls, as the Thibetans were advancing in force to attack us.

The news seemed to be too good to be true, and at first we could hardly believe it, as little or nothing of the enemy had been seen for the past few days, and we thought that it only was a little show got up for the benefit of the Lieutenant-Governor. Nevertheless, we were smart enough in getting to our posts, and the walls were manned and every one in his place and in the keenest expectation in about three minutes. The north-east and south faces of the camp were in charge of the Derbys, and were manned by half G Company, with Captain Wyly and Lieutenant Bowman; and H Company with Captain Gosset and Lieutenants Temple and Heyman; whilst the other half of G Company of forty-five rifles was posted as a reserve in the centre of the camp near the staff tents under Lieutenant Iggulden; the whole of the Derbys being, of course, under Captain Wyly, the senior officer of the Regiment with the detachment.

All doubts as to the genuineness of the attack were soon set at rest. Looking towards the Tukola Pass, which lay almost due north of the camp and about 2400 yards in a direct line from it, though considerably further by road, large numbers of Thibetans could be observed crossing it, and advancing towards the camp. They were evidently in considerable force, as many hundreds were to be seen at that early hour, it then being about half-past five in the morning. One of our two guns was dragged up to the ridge and got into position commanding the Tukola Pass, the other gun remaining at the main entrance on the south side of the camp, and commanding some open ground towards our line of retreat, where it was expected the main attack would finally develop.

At 5.45 a.m. the gun on the ridge fired the first shot at the enemy advancing across the Tukola Pass, and caused them hastily to take cover behind the projecting spurs on the hill side. This was the first

use made of our artillery against the enemy in the campaign so far, as they were unable, owing to the mist, to come into action at Jeluksoo or Lingtu.

Shortly after this, at about six a.m., large numbers of the enemy were seen advancing through the trees and rhododendron bushes to our right front, having come down by a different way to the right of the Tukola Pass.

These Thibetans soon established themselves on the edge of the wood, on the north-east part of the camp opposite to where the Derbys were posted, at distances varying from six to three hundred yards, and commenced a heavy fire on the camp with their matchlocks.

To this our men replied by volleys and independently whenever they caught sight of the enemy. There was also a picquet of the Derbys posted on the ridge to the north of the camp, which was ordered to retire at 6.15 a.m., as large numbers of Thibetans were coming down the ridge to where they were posted, rendering their detached position unsafe, as the woods at that place grew right up to and in rear of one side of their post, and they might have been rushed and cut off.

The picquets of the Pioneers held their ground, being posted on better ground. One of them was about five hundred yards to the right of the south entrance of the camp, behind a little hill with the stream running round it, and open ground on all sides of it for some hundreds of yards. This picquet consisted of thirty men, and stood its ground pluckily, and was extremely useful in preventing the enemy working his way round the hills to our right rear.

The other picquet of the Pioneers was also of thirty rifles and held a position on the road to the Tukola at the bottom of the ravine to the left of the camp, commanding the bridge over the stream in the main valley of Gnatong and also a good deal of the road leading to the Tukola. This picquet also did

splendid work in guarding our left rear, and also later on in the day, when reinforced, did much execution on the Thibetans, who attacked them with considerable vigour in some hundreds.

The enemy continued to push their attack with vigour till seven a.m., their numbers being reinforced; and about this time their fire became extremely galling and dangerous, nearly every tent in the camp having several bullets through it. Colour-Sergeant Denihan of H Company, who was lying sick in his tent, was struck by a spent bullet, which passed through his belt, giving him a severe blow, but luckily not penetrating his body. Many buckets, canteens, tin pots, &c., were riddled, and it seemed a mercy no one was wounded. All our men were, however, under cover manning the walls, which accounts for their immunity, as the walls were quite bullet proof; otherwise, no doubt we should have had many casualties. G and H Companies continued firing at the enemy whenever seen, accounting for a good many, as was afterwards ascertained. One enormous Thibetan, afterwards found to be six feet seven inches, had established himself behind a tree only a couple of hundred yards from the camp, and for a long time continued firing at us, seeming to bear a charmed life against the storm of bullets directed at him, being at last knocked over by one of H Company. The guns fired shrapnel at short range at intervals into the woods, but the Thibetans did not seem to mind much, as they had good cover behind the large fir trees, and only replied by a volley of their peculiar yells whenever a shell burst in their vicinity.

It was a different matter, however, in the open, as at about seven a.m. some 300 or 400 Thibetans were observed collected together in a mass on the Tukola Pass, and the gun on the ridge sent three shrapnel shells at them in quick succession, hitting off the range exactly, as, looking through glasses, the shells

burst just over them, and the way they took to their heels and got under cover was a sight to see. It must have astonished them considerably having men killed by bullets at 2400 yards distance.

As the enemy showed no signs of retiring, and their fire was increasing, at about seven a.m. orders were issued for Lieutenant Iggulden and the reserve to sally forth, by the main camp gate and the Pioneer picquet on the right of the camp, and make a detour up the minor Gnatong valley, to drive out the Thibetans from the wood on the north-east part of the camp.

As soon as the reserve under Iggulden cleared the Pioneer picquet, it had to advance across some 600 yards of open ground before it could obtain some slight cover in rhododendron bushes. The men were extended to four-paces interval, with a support of twenty men under Sergeant Windebank, and the open ground negotiated at a double, halting half-way to get in one volley and obtain a little breath, as it is no joke having to go out of a walk for any distance at over 12,000 feet.

As soon as the enemy perceived Iggulden's advance they directed the whole of the fire from the woods on his party, and ceased firing at the camp, but they missed their opportunity in catching him in the open, and he soon had his men under cover and within 400 yards of the Thibetans. At this period Sergeant Seckington was shot dead alongside of Lieutenant Iggulden, whilst receiving an order, by a bullet in the centre of his forehead. A further advance to better cover was made by Iggulden's half of G Company, and a small spur in the bed of the stream reached within some 300 yards of the wood, from whence his fire soon began to tell and many Thibetans were shot down, and finding the place too hot for them they began to retire up the hill by twos and threes. On this a still further advance up the bed of the stream was made, the men moving with great dash, and a

hot fire kept up on the enemy, who were now in full flight.

At nine a.m. a reinforcement of half H Company, with Captain Gosset and Lieutenant Temple, was sent out with fresh ammunition to help Iggulden in the pursuit, as the latter's ammunition had failed.

H Company, after joining Iggulden's party, advanced straight up the bed of the valley, G Company extending and clearing the wood and the high ground above Gnatong camp. A good many stragglers were accounted for, and the two half companies eventually joined hands again at the top of the valley, 13,000 feet high, where we had expected to have had a good view of the line taken by the enemy in their retreat. Unfortunately the clouds descended and it became very misty, so that we could not tell for a little while which way the enemy had gone, though we knew they must have gone somewhere towards the Tukola Pass on our left. All this while we could hear the Pioneers firing heavily on the Thibetans some 1500 yards away towards the Tukola. Iggulden's half of G Company made a short advance to the top of a spur a little farther on, and the mist lifting a bit, he saw some 800 yards off a large body of 500 or 600 Thibetans drawn up on an eminence to his right front, accompanied by three mounted men, and presenting a splendid mark, and was enabled to pour in upon them, to their utmost dismay and astonishment, three or four rapid volleys from the whole of his half company, doing tremendous execution. At the first volley some twenty or thirty men were seen to fall, and one of the horses also went down, whilst the masses of the enemy dispersed in all directions. Unfortunately, again the dense and heavy mist came on before further destruction could be dealt to the enemy.

In vain we waited some time for the clouds to clear, but fate favoured the Thibetans and the dense clouds saved them from annihilation, as it remained

very misty for the remainder of the day. Further pursuit was in consequence given up, as the ground was unknown, and the hillsides very difficult with snow and tangled rhododendrons and juniper scrub. It was then about noon, and every one became very cold, as we were standing on snow, and at an elevation of 13,000 feet, besides which most of us had got wet to our middles advancing up the icy cold stream in the morning. Orders then came for us to retire back to camp and to count the dead and pick up the wounded on our way back. This we did, picking up several wounded, and reaching camp at about two p.m. pretty well tired out after some eight hours' fighting and climbing on an empty stomach.

The 32nd Pioneers looked after the left front of the camp and the main Gnatong valley, and had also done extremely well. Their picquet at the bottom of the ravine had held in check some 400 of the enemy until 7 a.m., the time Lieutenant Iggulden's party had started out. At about that time they were reinforced by twenty-five sepoy under Lieutenant Tytler, as two or three of the picquet had been wounded. The whole of them fixed swords and advanced up a slight open hill to charge the enemy, led by Lieutenant Tytler; as they neared the crest of the hill they were met by about fifty Thibetans led by one of their chiefs, who charged down on them. Before they came to close quarters the Thibetan chief was shot down, seeing which the rest of the men turned and fled. On gaining the top of the hill Lieutenant Tytler saw some 600 Thibetans in retreat, and he killed a good number of them, pursuing them for several hundred yards up the valley, and had he had more men with him he could have effectually continued his pursuit. After some little time a further reinforcement of fifty Pioneers, under Lieutenant Digan, subsequently increased by 100 more, under Colonel Bromhead, arrived. These pursued the Thibetans nearly to the top of the Tukola, until enveloped in dense clouds.

The Pioneers lost four killed and seven wounded in the engagement. Altogether over 100 dead Thibetans were found on the ground, and three times that number must have been wounded.

The plucky way in which the enemy exposed themselves to our fire in removing their dead and wounded during the engagement, excited our admiration; and, in fact, considering the rough muskets they used, and how badly armed they were, we all thought they fought courageously and well, and they went up considerably in our estimation.

Most of the Thibetans were armed with a match-lock, fitted with a rest, as their chief weapon, besides which they carried a long, straight, clumsy cutting sword, a dagger, and a spear for use at close quarters. Some few, too, who were not provided with firearms, had bows and poisoned arrows, but none of these came to close quarters.

They were clothed with a loose-fitting sort of coat, tied in at the waist, made of a light grey woollen and hair fabric, some also being made of skins of wild animals, and had long felt boots reaching to the knees, with soles of camel hair, and a round felt hat with the brim turned up. They also carried charms, prayers, and little images enclosed in copper boxes inscribed with the mystic Bhuddist prayer, besides curiously carved and made powder flasks and bullet bags.

We had taken about twenty prisoners, most of them badly wounded, and from information obtained from them, which could be relied on as pretty accurate, they stated that the numbers who had started at nine the previous evening were 2300 Thibetan soldiers. They had intended, no doubt, to have attacked our camp and surprised us some two hours earlier, but, as European commanders have done before them, they miscalculated their time. The men engaged were nearly without exception soldiers of splendid physique, powerfully built and well fed, and are believed to be the flower of the Thibetan army,

many of them coming from Khamba, beyond Lhasa, some 500 miles away.

At three p.m. on the afternoon of the fight we performed the sad rite of burying poor Sergeant Seckington of G Company. Every European and officer in the camp turned out, and joined the solemn procession which wound its way slowly to a knoll close by the lower side of the camp where his grave was laid. He died a soldier's death, serving his country with his front to the foe, and his friends and relations have good cause to be proud of him.

The Lieutenant-Governor, Sir Steuart Bayley, got more than he bargained for in visiting Gnatong. He at least brought us luck in a very pretty fight, as it was not improbable that the Thibetans heard of his visit and purposely attacked on that day, the chance of bagging a Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal being an opportunity not to be missed. Anyhow, he will be able to say he has been through an action and under fire on his return to Darjeeling. Two or three bullets passed through his tent, and it was just as well he was not in at the time. His staff also had lots of shots at the enemy, and will no doubt long remember the 22nd of May at Gnatong.

On the 23rd May, G Company, under Captain Wyllly, proceeded at dawn to reconnoitre towards the Jelapla. They found some dead and two wounded men near the Tukola Pass, and just on the reverse side of it a place where the Thibetans had encamped. They had evidently left in a hurry, as lots of tents, coats, hats, provisions, &c., were found lying strewn about all over the place. On advancing to the Nimla, the Kupup valley was found deserted, but thirty or forty Thibetans were observed carrying something up the Jelapla Pass, probably wounded. The usual heavy mist came on at about 11 a.m., totally obscuring everything. It is the great drawback to this place that for nine months in the year one is nearly always in the clouds. It may be clear at night time and for

a few hours in the early morning, but towards mid-day the heavy clouds roll up from the steamy valleys below, and either envelope us in dense mist, or wet us to the skin with rain or snow.

We had a horrible and ghastly task in burying the dead on our side of the camp, which took a couple of days, as we feared contaminating our water supply, and the corpses had either to be burnt or carried some distance to the opposite side of the valley. Thibetans are about the filthiest barbarians it is possible to find, and apparently never wash from year's end to year's end, and consequently accumulate an indescribable amount of dirt on their persons.

The Lieut.-Governor and staff returned to Darjeeling on the 23rd, well pleased with their experience at Gnatong.

On the 24th a further reconnaissance was made by H Company under Captain Gosset towards the Jelapla Pass, when a great many fires were seen in the pass and a goodly number of Thibetans. They are probably burning their dead, or else they have established a strong post at the pass.

There is also another pass about three miles to the right of the Jelapla Pass, which the Thibetans use occasionally. This pass is known as the Pemberingo Pass and lies about due north of our camp, and some six miles off. It is a steep and difficult pass on the borders of Bhutan. A party under Lieutenant Iggulden was also sent out to visit the spot where they fired the volleys at the Thibetans at the close of the action, on the 23rd, and they found a dead pony and two or three dead men there, besides many traces showing the volleys must have had considerable effect. It afterwards transpired that the pony belonged to the Thibetan Commander-in-Chief, who was leading the column which attacked Gnatong by the north, the Thibetans having attacked simultaneously in two columns.

The days following the attack of the Thibetans on

the Gnatong camp were pouring wet ones, and there were all the signs that the monsoon had set in, not a pleasant prospect for us if we had to stay up here, as the rainfall in these parts from the month of June to September is tremendous, probably not far short of 180 inches.

Our prisoners, who have increased in number, seem quite cheerful at their fate, though, poor fellows, some of them have frightful wounds, the Snider rifle with which the Pioneers are armed making a horrible wound. Our doctors do their best and are able to gain a first-class experience in gunshot wounds of every description of complication. The mossy lichen, which hangs from the trees round here in festoons, makes an excellent soft substitute for lint, and in a few days, with the exception of one or two hopeless cases, all the wounded were doing well.

The prisoners say the best and bravest troops of Thibet were opposed to us, and that they suppose that now the Lamas themselves will probably form an army to oppose us, and naively add, they hope they may be there to see what happens when they do.

The Viceroy wired his congratulations on our victory over the Thibetans. We are all now anxious to hear what the Government has decided to do next. Needless to say we are burning to advance into Chumbi, and if necessary on to Lhasa. Chumbi has the reputation of being a delightful place with a dry climate, where we should escape the eternal drenching rains of Gnatong. The valley of Chumbi being beyond the first high snowy barrier of the Himalayas, most of the rainfall descends on the south side, so that comparatively little passes into Chumbi. For this reason the Rajah of Sikkim passes most of the year at his palace at Chumbi, in Thibet, preferring the climate and surroundings there to his damp State of Sikkim.

Towards the end of May we commenced making plank huts, as it is evident, if we are to stay on, we

can no longer keep a dry skin in our tents, which are getting rotten and worn out with the continual months' wetting they have had.

We have been expecting a further night attack from the Thibetans, and had an alarm on the night of the 28th, the Pioneer picquets reporting natives coming down the valley, but it proved to be some of our Political, Mr. Paul's, spies returning.

May 31st.—We are still anxiously awaiting the decision of Government as to our next move. The Jelapla Pass is now free of snow, and occupied by a garrison of Thibetans, who are employed in making sangars and in other defensive operations. If we stay impotently at Gnatong, the Thibetans will surely pluck up courage and attack us again. The Lamas, who are pig-headed and obstinate, will oblige them to do so, and probably construe our supineness and inaction into fear of attacking them. They will probably also think they did as much damage to us in their attack on us at Gnatong as we did to them, as their Depens or leaders are not likely to magnify their defeat in any way.

The proper course for us to pursue would be to advance to Kupup and farther to attack and drive the Thibetans from the Jelapla Pass, and pursue them into Rinchiongong, a town on the other side, and even to the Rajah's palace at Chumbi. After which we could either retire back again after sacking and burning what we could, or remain at Chumbi till the Thibetans came to their senses, or until plans are matured for an advance on Lhassa. The provoking and senseless policy of waiting for China to act in the matter will never result in any settlement being arrived at.

CHAPTER VI.

Disappointing decision of Government—The monsoon at Gnatong—Field engineering operations—H Company and half G return to Darjeeling—Increased activity amongst the Thibetans—Half G Company recalled on way back to Darjeeling—General and staff return to Gnatong—Detachment also return—Reinforcements ordered—More Derbys to the Front—Arrival of head quarters under Colonel McCleverty with E and C Companies.

JUNE 1st.—News is received that no forward movement is to take place at present, the Government still apparently having faith that China would settle the dispute between the Lamas and ourselves, as a new Amba, or Chinese Ambassador, is said to be on his way from Peking to Lhasa, who is going to wheel the Lamas into line, and bring them to reason. The power of the Chinese in Thibet is, however, rather doubtful; they are nominally the suzerain power there, but have not many troops in the country, and the Lamas do pretty well as they like, and it is not thought that the Amba will be able to coerce them, unless backed up by a considerable number of Chinese troops.

Needless to say we are all very much disappointed at this decision, as after the determined attack by the Thibetans on our camp on the 22nd May, we had all made up our minds that the climax had come, and that we should not now be long in squaring our account with the Lamas.

However, there was no use grumbling. Diplomats and politicians seldom agree with soldiers' views when waging war, so all we had to do was to do as we were told, and keep our opinions to ourselves.

Campaigns can seldom be finished with one or two pitched battles, and in most wars there is a long

period of waiting and manœuvring before one side or the other has had enough, and the final treaty is signed. This chapter, therefore, will be devoted to a description of the four months waiting in our camp at Gnatong, with our enemy only a few miles off, and never knowing what the events of the next day would bring forth.

June 1st to 3rd.—The usual reconnoitring parties of two officers and fifty men go daily to the Nimla Pass, leaving camp at five a.m., and returning about noon, and take note of the Thibetan movements on the Jelapla Pass. A good number of the enemy have been seen lately, and there is no doubt of their intention of opposing our advance when we do make one. Large numbers are daily observed at work in the Jelapla Pass, and on our side of it they have run up a wall along the ridge of the pass, calculated at over 1000 yards long, besides which they have built several sangars or stone walls, and a stone fort in various defensive positions, half-way down the gorge leading from the pass to Kupup, and well within our territory. This shows that there must be several thousands of them in the vicinity of the pass, as a good many fires are always seen burning. As the mist generally comes up at about eight a.m., remaining for the rest of the day, we have no opportunity of seeing them at work in the middle of the day. On the 2nd June two Thibetan prisoners were sent back with a letter for the Delai Lama, or head Thibetan official at Lhassa. They were very reluctant to leave us, as they had been fed and treated well, and seemed doubtful as to their reception on the other side. However, our party saw them well into the Kupup valley, and they were obliged to go on.

On 3rd June Captain Gosset left us on a tour of road inspection as far as Rongli Chu. Our Political started one of his periodical alarms, that the Thibetans are to make a night attack in great force on us in the next two or three days; accordingly we

strengthened the defences by running wire through the abattis, and Lieutenant Iggulden started making an inundation on the north side of the camp by damming up the stream between two small hills. Satisfactory news was received that the Thibetan second in command was killed by Iggulden's long volleys on the 22nd, and that he was shot through the jaw and died on his way back over the Jelap Pass.

June 4th to 6th.—The Thibetans failed to make any further attack, and nobody much expected they would, as we are rapidly losing faith in our Political's information, which has up till now proved utterly useless or ten days old. Probably this attack which was to have taken place was the one which did actually come off on the 22nd of last month. Iggulden's inundation on the right front of the camp is proving a great success, and we have now a small lake some 300 yards long by fifty wide, which would effectually damp the ardour of any Thibetans who might try to rush the camp from that direction, the water being from four to twelve feet deep and icy cold.

Our bird collector has been getting a large variety of small birds; a small variety of humming bird which has appeared, with plumage all the colours of the rainbow, being especially beautiful.

On the 6th June, Captain Gosset returned from his road inspection, and reported the road from Gnatong to Rongli Chu to be in a very bad state nearly all the way. The bottoms of the valleys are now becoming feverish and malarious, and Gosset was laid up with fever on his return.

June 7th to 9th.—We go on working hard at our hutting arrangements, and have now completed the skeletons of three sets of barracks, each capable of holding about sixty men. Two of them are being made defensible, the outside walls being made of half-sawn logs, pierced at intervals of a yard by

loop-holes, and will form part of the outer wall of the fort. All the huts are 100 feet long by 18 feet wide, side walls 7 feet high, 12 feet high in the middle. We are roofing some of them with bamboos, which, split up, make excellent and dry thatching, put on to a thickness of about a foot. A number of Darjeeling sawyers are also coming up, who are to turn out planks which will make capital roofing. Anything is better than tents now, and we have to make the most of the time, when it is not raining, to get on with our navvying and work, which is pretty heavy, in addition to the daily reconnoitring, guards, and picquets.

On the 8th, Captain Wyllly took a reconnoitring party to the left of the Nimla Pass, some three miles beyond, to try and obtain a view up the valley on the other side, and beyond the Jelapla, but he was unable to get a complete view of the valley owing to clouds, and nothing important was observed.

On the 9th, Lieutenant Heyman, who was in charge of the morning reconnoitring party, saw over 1000 Thibetans. They turned out in large numbers, lining the whole length of the wall on the top of the Jelapla Pass, as soon as our men put in an appearance on the Nimla; we expect they thought we intended attacking them, owing to our unusual movements on the previous day. They are, however, quite safe as far as we are concerned, as we have the strictest orders not to attack them.

News was received about this time that the whole of the European portion of the garrison is to be withdrawn to Ghoom, near Darjeeling, during the rains, pending further negotiations with the Thibetans, and to be ready to return immediately if required. We are to move down by half companies, with intervals of one day between each party. The marches are to be very short, as the transport animals are beginning to suffer severely under the very hard work they have had, of daily convoys

of rations for the troops at the front, over shocking mountain roads and in soaking rains. Both mules and their drivers are worn to a shadow, and the percentage of sick amongst the mules is as high as 33 per cent.

The first party of the Derbys will leave on the 12th, and the men are much pleased at the prospect of soon again reaching the comforts of civilisation and the canteen.

June 10th to 13th.—It has been decided to build a stockade round the camp fourteen feet high, and in consequence we have stopped work on the huts, and all hands are very busy fetching up from the surrounding woods logs sawn in half to make the stockade with, and soon from all sides men are seen marching into camp like some gigantic species of caterpillar bearing huge logs on their shoulders. We have been served out with a couple of large saws, and have a saw pit of our own, with Private Butcher as boss sawyer. After one or two false starts he soon had his saws going gaily, and he and his crew turned out some hundreds of feet of sawn logs in a very short time.

By the time the Derbys return to quarters they will have learnt a good many wrinkles most of us did not know of before. What with carpentering, house-building, road-making, wood-felling, draining, and many other various occupations connected with field fortification, we are all more or less practical engineers by now.

The last day or two we have been blessed with fine weather, and the nights have been clear and bright, but although we are nearing the middle of June we have had frost the last two nights.

On 12th June Captain Gosset, Lieutenant Heyman, and the right half of H Company marched out of Gnatong *en route* for Darjeeling, which they reach in eight marches. Lieutenant Temple and the left half of H follow on the 14th,

and on the 16th Lieutenant Bowman and the right half of G started down.

On the 14th June our native spies captured two Thibetans on the Tukola; there were three of them, but one escaped. They were in a great fright when brought in, no doubt thinking they would be treated by us as their people would treat any of us if we fell into their hands, which would probably be a boiling in oil, or something equally horrible. They said they had come to look for food and clothes, having heard a lot of these commodities had been left on the Tukola Pass. Further interrogation elicited the news that there were 3500 Thibetan soldiers posted on the Jelapla and in Chumbi, but that they were much disheartened by their late defeat, and were not at all anxious for another fight, and besides being very short of food, that it was only the fear of incurring the wrath of the lamas that kept them there at all.

On the 16th two small mountain guns of an obsolete type arrived, and were handed to the Pioneers to take the place of the two guns of 9-1 R.A. Mountain Battery, which were to return to Darjeeling. They are not as accurate or long ranging as the new pattern mountain screw gun, but are fairly useful up to 2500 yards, and better than nothing.

On the 17th the General and Staff left for Padong after trying the new guns. Several rounds were fired at a stone hut some 800 yards off, and when the range was found the shooting was fairly good, and much better than was expected. It is believed these guns were last used in the Abyssinian war, and possibly the 1st Battalion of the Derbys, the 45th, may have seen them there. On the 18th the two guns 9-1 R.A. left, and only the left half of G Company and the Pioneers remained in the fort.

All the new stockade is now complete and loop-holed, with a banquettes on the inside about four feet high, and may be considered fairly secure against

anything that the Thibetans are likely to bring against us. It would be next to impossible for them to rush it at night, surrounded as it is by a heavy abattis, wire entanglements, and an inundation, and having also a very steep khud on the north-west side.

We now get quantities of wild rhubarb, and revel in tarts, stews, and jams. The rhubarb is just the same as the garden stuff produced in England, only much smaller, and the acid taste is very agreeable, after being without fresh fruit or vegetables so long. The break in the weather still holds up, and it is bright and sunshiny, and the number and variety of wild flowers to be found on the mountain now is almost incredible, parts of the hill sides being a blaze of colour discernible at a long distance. The following are among the more common flowers met with—*Polyanthus*, and a species of primrose, forget-me-nots, anemonies, azaleas, rhododendrons, violets, butter-cups; all in several colours, besides a host of other plants too numerous to mention, even if we knew half their names.

June 20th to 22nd. On the morning of the 20th Captain Wyllly and Lieutenant Iggulden with the left half of G Company marched out of Gnatong, being the last British troops to go, leaving the fort in the sole possession of some 600 of the Pioneers under command of Colonel Sir B. Bromhead.

The first march was quite a short one of five miles to Lingtu. The road along this path was fairly good and level, and the short distance was soon accomplished, as we had mules for our transport. The men were accommodated in tents, as the serai at Lingtu was too dirty to live in. We had heavy rain in the afternoon and some of the tents got flooded. It rained pretty hard on the morning of the 21st, but fortunately cleared up at about eight a.m., and was soon fine enough for us to make a start for Jeluksoo, about five and a-half miles down hill all the way.

To-day we had about eighty coolies instead of mule transport. They gave us some trouble at starting, as each coolie wanted to grab the lightest load, and all began to jabber at once, after the manner of natives. A judicious application of the boot and bamboo, however, eventually settled things to every one's satisfaction, and the whole crowd were shortly on the move with their respective burdens. The road down to Jeluksoo was very steep and rough, being like the dry bed of a torrent in many places. Here we found tents pitched, and the temperature much warmer, having descended 4000 feet.

It rained heavily on the night of the 21st, and at about three a.m. we were awoke by a messenger bearing an urgent telegram from the D.A.A.G. at Padong, ordering us to stand fast, as an attack was expected at Gnatong. We waited anxiously till daylight, and at about seven a.m. we received a flag message from Lingtu ordering us back to Gnatong with all possible speed, as an attack from the Thibetans was imminent. As soon as possible, therefore, leaving a small guard to bring in our baggage, we started off on our counter-march to Gnatong, taking our ammunition with us, eleven miles, with a climb of 4000 feet in it. It was 8.15 a.m. when we left Jeluksoo, and we reached Gnatong at about 11.30 a.m. This was a remarkable performance considering the bad and rough state of the road, the steepness of the ascent, and the high and trying elevation. The Pioneers were much astonished at seeing us back so soon, as they did not expect us to arrive till late in the afternoon; but they little knew the marching power of the Derbys, and of the "fighting forty" in particular, for thus the left half of G Company were proud to call themselves. Colonel Bromhead had kindly got a plank hut ready for us, which just accommodated our half company, and was a great improvement to being under canvas. All the men had an extra dram of rum, and some warm coats to

put on till our baggage arrived, which it did about 3 p.m., thanks to the exertions of Lance-Corporal Webb, who with his very small guard must have had very hard work in getting it on so quickly, as it had to be tied up and reloaded at Lingtu, where they changed from coolies to mules.

The reason of our recall appears to have been that yesterday, on the 21st, the usual reconnoitring party saw some 3000 Thibetans in the Jelapla gorge actively engaged in carrying down stores or something towards the Kupup valley. A great swell, dressed entirely in white, and with a large escort, was also seen going about. These visible signs, and our Political's alarming telegrams that an attack was to be made on us about the 25th, rendered it advisable that the native troops at Gnatong should not be unsupported by British. Our only hopes now are that our recall will not be for nothing. Every one went to bed early, as there is a full moon, and it is a likely night for an attack.

June the 23rd to 30th.—Fine morning on the 23rd but no sign of the Thibetans. The Pioneers had some more practice with their two mountain guns, and made very good shooting. In the afternoon there was a false alarm, that the Thibetans were approaching from Shalambi in our rear, between this and Lingtu, but it turned out to be only some coolies who were mistaken by an excited mule driver for the enemy. Much excitement among the sepoys to-night, as they think we are certainly to be again attacked. The Chinese envoy is due to arrive at Lhasa on the 25th, and it is said the Thibetans will make a final attempt to drive us out, before the Amba puts a stop to their further proceedings. It rained hard all the 24th and 25th, and our reconnoitring parties could see nothing owing to heavy clouds.

On the 26th two Thibetan warriors came in, bearing a letter from the Phari Jongpen in answer to one of our previous letters, and in which he proposed

that a meeting should be held in the Kupup valley, between the Phodong Lama and Sikkim Dewan on our side, and himself and some other Thibetan authorities on theirs; the date to be settled by us. These Thibetan soldiers, who were remarkably fine well-made men, told us that the Chinese Ambassador had arrived at Lhasa. A reply was sent back on the 27th, and the Thibetans were each made a present of fifty rupees and were well fed and entertained on our side. They were also allowed to see the fort and whatever they liked, which we thought rather a mistake.

On the evening of the 26th, Sergeant McCullough of G Company arrived in camp, having walked in from Darjeeling, a distance of nearly eighty miles, in two days. This N.C.O. had always evinced the most keen and soldier-like spirit throughout the expedition, and hearing that an attack was imminent at Gnatong had marched off to rejoin the headquarters of his company. The performance of marching forty miles a day over wretched hill roads, and up and down stupendous mountains, often in torrents of rain, saddled with a rifle, ammunition, and accoutrements, was a remarkable one, and the spirit animating such a deed could not but excite our warmest admiration; though strictly speaking Sergeant McCullough should have remained with Lieutenant Bowman's half company. However, Captain Wyllly could not find it in his heart to reprimand such a deed, prompted as it was by an overmastering desire to be first in any attack on the enemy, and we were glad to have McCullough again with us, and hoped he would have another opportunity of displaying his courage.

Such was the spirit, indeed, of the whole of the Derbys, who were always anxious to be the first at the enemy, who endured the hardships of cold and discomforts of life at Gnatong without a murmur, and were ready to undergo any duty they were called on to do.

General Graham and staff returned to Gnatong on the 27th, and on the 29th we were able to get a glimpse of the Jelapla again, after some three days' rain, and found that the Thibetans had built a new wall right across the gorge some hundred yards nearer Kupup valley than the old fortification, since we last saw the place. There were also about twenty tents pitched up the pass. On the 30th some Bhutias brought in a letter from Rinchingong, but the contents were not divulged. We have now a great many Nepal wood-cutters and sawyers up here, who turn out a large number of planks daily, so that hutting arrangements are proceeding pretty briskly.

July 1st to 10th.—We had some more trials at night with star shells, which lit up the hill side opposite us for about a quarter of a minute, and were very successful. I fancy they would considerably astonish the Thibetans if they ever make a night attack, which they are always threatening to do. We also had some target practice with some Thibetan matchlocks we had captured, using about seven drams of their own powder, and their own bullets, but could not make much of them, only managing to hit a six-foot square target twice at a hundred yards out of a dozen shots.

On July 5th we had another scare, reports being brought in that some 2000 Thibetans were in the Kupup valley, and 100 more were advancing on the Tukola. Some shots were exchanged between a picquet of the Pioneers on the Tukola, but the Thibetans did not advance towards Gnatong. It turned out from subsequent information that the Thibetans had turned out in force to attempt to entrap the Phodong Lama, who was to have had an interview in the Kupup valley with the Phari Jong. However, as General Graham would not allow the Lama to attend, the Thibetans were unable to carry out their treacherous design.

We are all hoping something definite as to our

future policy will soon be arrived at, as the Thibetans are getting bolder at our inactivity, and it is high time the Chinese Amba interfered, which he has had plenty of time to do. But it looks very much as if he either did not care to order the Thibetans to withdraw or had not the power to do so, in which case our hand will be forced, and the Government will have to go in for more active measures than hitherto. We all hope the remainder of the regiment will be ordered up, and that another few weeks will see us in Thibet.

July 10th to 20th.—In addition to the Thibetans in the Jelapla, they are now known to occupy the Pemberingo Pass, a steep pass about two miles to the right of the Jelap, and are fortifying it with sangars, in the same way they have the other pass; one can now count seventy of their tents in the Jelap and twenty in the Pemberingo.

We, too, on our side are improving our defences, and a series of powerful block houses of great strength, to hold a garrison of twenty men each, are being built round the fort, on all the commanding positions.

On the 21st, Lieutenant Iggulden, with a reconnoitring party, surprised some Thibetans who had advanced across the Kupup valley, and fired several volleys at them at a range of about 700 yards, killing seven or eight of them.

July 22nd to 31st.—The native spies bring in news that there is a considerable movement amongst the enemy. Fresh tents are being pitched daily in the two passes, and even a few in the Kupup valley, and there must be over 300 tents of theirs pitched inside our territory, which ought to represent 3000 Thibetans in Sikkim, and goodness knows how many more in reserve on the other side of the passes.

On the 23rd Captain Wyllly fired on a party of 150 Thibetans who were building sangars in the Kupup valley and killed and wounded several. We

hear the Darjeeling detachment is to come here again, Lieutenant Bowman's half of G Company and four guns 9-1 R.A. to come to Gnatong; H Company and two guns go to Padong for the present. We also hear that we are to be reinforced next month, by two more companies of ours and a battalion of Gurkhas, preparatory to an advance and attack on the passes, news which is hailed with delight.

Accordingly, we start to work to get huts ready to accommodate the other half of G Company. The Thibetans here have removed their tents from Kupup, probably regarding the place unsafe after the experience Captain Wyllly impressed on them the other day. They have, however, increased the number of tents in both valleys leading to the passes; the Pemberingo valley is crowded with tents and looks like a small town. We hear that the Thibetan transport is now in first-class working order, and that they have 1000 yaks and 500 mules working supplies up regularly from a place called Giantze, a large town in the interior of Thibet, where provisions are said to be plentiful. We often observe, when on reconnaissance, plenty of mules and ponies bringing baggage across the passes, or grazing in the valley below, and have great hopes in future operations of mounting ourselves on one of these. It is also reported that a Thibetan chief of the name of "Serkumse" has returned from Khumba, a place beyond Lhasa, with a large levy of recruits to carry on the war with, and is now at Rinchingong, a town on the far side of Jelapla. As reinforcements are arriving for the armies on both sides, it looks as if a crisis is impending.

CHAPTER VII.

Enlargement of Gnatong camp to receive reinforcements—Head-quarters Derby Regiment with E and C Company leave Dum Dum—Rail to Darjeeling—H Company returns to Gnatong—March of C and E Company—Arrival of the 2nd Battalion of the 1st Gurkhas—Great cake competition—Thibetans still truculent—Waiting till the clouds roll by.

WE are now entering on a fresh era of this protracted campaign, and with the arrival of fresh troops hope that a speedy termination may be brought to the weary game of sitting still in front of an enemy we are spoiling to go for, but are not allowed to.

August 1st to 10th.—The "fighting forty" of G Company work hard to get the new hut they are building ready for the other half of G on its arrival. It will be the best hut in the place, and has quite a noble appearance. On the 22nd August, it being a warm day, we had a bathing parade in the afternoon, and most of the men had a swim in the inundation, which is six to fourteen feet deep in the middle, but the water was colder than we expected, and nobody cared to stay in long. Afterwards we played football to warm ourselves.

On the 5th the right half of G Company under Lieutenant Bowman arrived all sound. They looked rather pale by the side of the men who had remained here, but no doubt three or four days will soon alter that.

Still busy building more huts, a hospital, and two cook houses. We now run up a hut in no time and are quite expert at the work, and notwithstanding our grumbling we are really probably much happier out here than in cantonments; and all the busy work with hardly ever a spare moment makes the time pass

quickly. The men are all wonderfully fit and we have had no sickness.

On the 6th the General and staff accompany our reconnoitring party and make a thorough examination of the Thibetan frontier. Lieutenant Iggulden is busy making a survey of the Gnatong valley and surroundings up to the Jelapla Pass, which will be useful by-and-bye. We are having a break in the rains at last, which we hope is a foretaste of the close of the monsoon.

August 11th to 17th.—On the 13th four guns 9-1 R.A. arrived at Gnatong. We are now preparing a camping ground for the remaining companies of ours, and as there is no room in the fort, a new piece of ground in the main Gnatong valley, immediately below the fort and commanded by it, is to be occupied, which will hold three companies of ours and the Gurkha battalion, or nearly 1000 men altogether. It is a difficult place to form a camp on, as the ground is very steep and stony, and terraces have to be cut out of the hill side, some of the stones to be removed being very large and troublesome to get out.

We hear that the remainder of the Derbyshire Regiment will go to Darjeeling, and occupy the barracks of the Artillery there, as they have had a scare in that place, and a report was circulated and obtained credence that 500 Thibetans had advanced past us and were preparing to loot Darjeeling at any moment. The Volunteer band are said to have dropped their instruments and fled when hearing of it, and many ladies, too, left for Calcutta by the next train, thoroughly believing the story; whilst others packed up their goods, and prepared to leave for the convalescent barracks at Jalapahar at a moment's notice. It seems pretty certain, however, that a very large force of Thibetans are collected on or about the Jelapla Pass, and their numbers are estimated at anything from 13,000 to 17,000, and native rumour exaggerates accordingly.

Orders were received at the headquarters of the regiment for the despatch of two more companies of the Derbyshire Regiment on August 10th, and Lieutenant-Colonel McCleverty decided, therefore, to make the four companies at Gnatong the headquarters of his regiment, and ordered E and C Companies to the front to join G and H. C Company was Captain Godley's company, with Lieutenants Granville and Lewarne as its subalterns. E Company was Major Hume's company, having Lieutenant Wilson as subaltern. Captain Godley had already gone to Sikkim to take command of H Company, in relief of Captain Gosset, who had been ordered home to the depot. E Company was on detachment at Barrackpore.

"C and E Companies, with Lieutenant-Colonel McCleverty commanding, Lieutenant Stopford, adjutant, and Lieutenant and Quartermaster Fox, set out from Dum Dum and Barrackpore on the 15th August, and railed through to Darjeeling, which they reached on the 16th, sleeping for the night in the Artillery Barracks at Jalapahar, where they arrived very late, owing to the train from Silligori to Ghoom breaking down, finding the load too heavy for one engine to drag up the hill. However, on another engine arriving and the train being split in two, the day's journey was finished. The men were much pleased at getting a free drink on the way up, presented by some hospitable and kind-hearted ladies at Kurseong.

On August 17th C and E Companies made their first march, fourteen miles, to Pashok, starting at 11 a.m. The march was down hill all the way, and tried the men's feet considerably. The transport ponies provided were a very indifferent lot, and Major Hume and E Company on rear guard had a very bad time of it, and got drenched to the skin. This was their first experience in turning-in, wet through, without a change of kit and getting no dinner till after tattoo, but they got more used to it before reaching Gnatong.

August 18th.—A march of four miles to the Teesta Bridge and ten miles up to Kalimpong. The heat of the Teesta valley and long pull up, with seventy rounds pouch ammunition, was found very trying. Many of the baggage animals had disappeared, and Lieutenant Lewarne and rear guard did not leave Pashok till mid-day.

August 19th.—From Kalimpong to Padong, about twelve miles. A fairly steep ascent to 6100 feet and then down again to 4700. The huts at Padong were found very leaky, and a good deal of difficulty was experienced by the cooks in getting dinner ready owing to the rain. Here a lot more of the pony transport decamped, and they were supplied with tents and mule transport.

August 20th.—A trying march to Dolepchen, said to be fourteen miles, but seemed to be a good deal longer, and we are all of opinion that the surveyors of these roads omitted to consider the corners when putting up mile stones; Irish miles are not in it! Another general drenching, and consequent discomfort to every one. The rear guard of C Company did not arrive in camp till eleven p.m., and many of the tents were, therefore, never pitched, men and officers taking shelter wherever they could for the night. Many kits were left behind owing to insufficient transport, and the heavy kit was left behind here under charge of the Quartermaster, Lieutenant Fox, and a small party. They followed on two days later, but all their meat rations went bad and they had to put up with biscuits for three days.

August 21st.—To Keulaka, a pretty march along the valley of a river ending up with a very stiff climb. Incessant rain again, and the camping ground ankle-deep in mud. Our transport was supplemented by some more mules, which improved matters considerably.

August 22nd.—March to Jeluksoo, five miles according to the route, but more like five leagues by

the actual road. A stiff pull up to 9000 feet. Again we arrived at Jeluksoo wet through, and found an extra tot of rum necessary to keep out the cold. Our sentries here got very energetic, and, on one occasion in answer to the challenge, the challenged one replied 'Sepoy!' 'Spy! are you,' said our sentry, 'then come along with me to the guard'; and the unfortunate man was marched off, and explanations followed.

On 23rd. Having heard that the Thibetans were expected to attack Gnatong we made an early start, full of courage and with revolvers loaded. We climbed up to Lingtu by moonlight, and saw the sun rising over Kinchinjunga, our first view of the snows. A terribly hard climb, but we eventually got to the top, though we heard no sounds of the Thibetan attack. We descended gently to Gnatong, five miles on, and were exceedingly glad to get to the end of our journey, though many of us only possessed the kit we stood in. At Gnatong C, E, and H Companies are encamped on a slope below the fort, and we have to run up a wall and abattis round our camp in case of attack."

Such was the itinerary of the march of the E and C Companies bringing up the headquarters of the Derbyshire Regiment to Gnatong. They had had rough times, as marching during a heavy monsoon in these mountains is no joke. We now numbered over 400 men of the Derbyshire Regiment at the front, and a further company was ordered later as a reserve to Padong, making altogether five full companies engaged in the campaign.

In the meantime, H Company, under Captain Godley, with Lieutenants Temple and Heyman, marched up to Gnatong from Padong, and camped inside the fort until the arrival of the other companies, when they moved down to the lower camp.

August 18th to 25th. Some Bhutias arrived on

the 19th with a letter from the Bhutia Rajah, but containing nothing of much importance. They came by the Natula Pass as the Thibetans would not allow them to come over either the Jelapla or the Pemberingo Passes.

On the 23rd Captain Wyllly went out at two a.m. to the Nimla to try and surprise the Thibetans, who were said to be in the habit of coming at night to the Tukola, but was unsuccessful.

We had a tremendous downpour of rain on the evening of the 23rd, which washed away the bridge over the East Gnatong stream, and made it extremely uncomfortable for the companies that arrived that day and were camped below, as many of them were without blankets or warm clothes.

On the 24th two companies of the 2nd 1st Gurkhas arrive and go into camp with our three companies in the lower camp.

August 26th to 31st. Start building a mess hut, as we shall probably remain here for some time, and also hard at work fortifying and hutting the lower camp.

Our menagerie up here received an addition of two cat bears, one of which was caught by some of our men. These animals are curious little beasts about the size of a badger. Their head is like that of a bear and of a whitish colour, whilst their tail and claws are those of a cat. The general colour of their bodies is a brightish red, and they have lovely long soft fur, which should be valuable if one could only get enough of it. We also have a serow and musk deer; besides an assortment of pi-dogs that have turned up in the most extraordinary manner, and have attached themselves to the regiment.

The whole of the Gurkhas are now here, and very useful and smart they look. They are a young lot of soldiers, having been raised only two years, and are very keen for a fight with the Thibetans.

Our companies that have lately come up from

Dum Dum are daily hardening themselves by long marches, as it takes some little time to get accustomed to these high altitudes, and every one on first coming up is troubled more or less with shortness of breath.

September 1st to 4th.—The lower camp is now getting quite a settled appearance, surrounded as it is by a stone wall some four feet high, with abattis in front of it, and connected with the upper fort by a loop-holed planked wall. Stone raised paths are now laid down, and it is possible to walk about down there without going up to one's knees in mud. Each company is hutting itself in turn.

On 4th August, the General took G Company and two guns with him to make a thorough examination of the Thibetan position in the Pemberingo and Jelap Passes, and as the morning was fine a good view was obtained. The Thibetans also turned out in some force on seeing us, accompanied as we were by the General and staff, and several other mounted officers who had turned out to have a look at the place. They showed no disposition to attack us, and beyond lining their sangars and sending some of their men to drive in thirteen of their ponies, which were grazing on the shores of the Bedang Chu Lake (and which we could have captured had we been allowed to go for them), they remained passively watching us. When we retired some of their scouts followed at a respectful distance, and exchanged some shots with the Pioneers, who are now employed repairing the road between this and Nimla. The Pioneers have also made a direct road to the Pemberingo ridge, which will be useful in case the Thibetans attack and we have to pursue them.

September 5th to 8th.—All our men go out marching every morning, training for the coming fight in the Jelap. We have started a library to enable the men to pass the weary hours when we are confined to our tents by torrents of rain, and soon have quite a respectable number of books and

magazines kindly sent by the ladies of Darjeeling. As the good people of Darjeeling seem to take such a kindly interest in our proceedings up here, the bright and happy idea of fostering and encouraging their sympathies by organising a cake competition inspired the brain of one of our most popular subalterns, and was accordingly acted upon. The following were a few of the rules:—"A committee of three judges was appointed. The prize was to be a handsome gold bangle presented by the mess. Any cakes competing to weigh over five pounds. Points given for size, quality, and appearance. The cakes to be numbered in Darjeeling before despatch, so that there should be no chance of partiality in giving the award. All expenses for carriage to be paid by the officers' mess." The idea took on like wild-fire, and cakes of all sorts and descriptions soon came laboriously up the hill, and there was great excitement amongst the fair sex at Darjeeling over the competition. Our Colonel was in fear and trembling as to what the results might be to some of the young officers, but as they generally manage to pull through most ordeals, he trusted nothing fatal would occur. As entries for this sporting event did not close till the end of September, I will defer a description of the result to the next chapter.

Arrangements for an advance against the Thibetans are now complete, and we only pray for a cessation of the monsoon, to be made quite happy. Each man will carry seventy rounds of ammunition in his pouch, and a further reserve of sixty per man will be taken on mules. Two blankets, a great coat, and a waterproof sheet will also be carried on mules. It is expected we shall bivouac out three nights, going as far as Chumbi.

September 9th to 12th.—The field telegraph is laid down as far as the Tukola, from whence a cable will be run along the ground, following the force as far as it goes.

We have several amateur photographers up here now, and very good views of the place and surroundings have been obtained.

On the 12th a small reconnoitring party of Gurkhas, under Lieutenant Ryder, went down to the valley below Pemberingo, and under cover of the clouds and mist surprised a small picquet of the Thibetans at the east end of Lake Bidang, who were posted in a small sangar there. There were five of them, and they were completely cut off from their line of retreat. On being called on to surrender by Lieutenant Ryder, they showed fight, and tried to escape, and in the mêlée that ensued two of them were killed, two escaped, and one was captured and brought into the camp. No casualties on our side.

On the 13th the Gurkhas captured another prisoner, and shot two more Thibetans. These prisoners were Kham soldiers, and came from some way beyond Lhassa; they were men of splendid physique. They reported on examination that there were 2000 men in the Pemberingo, and 7000 in the Jelapla Pass, and that they had a big gun at Rinchingong capable of shooting four or five miles. They say that the mass of their men are encamped some two or three miles on the far side of Jelapla, and that ten men occupy each tent.

We now often exchange shots with small parties of Thibetans, but they have learned the range and effect of our rifles, and keep at a respectful distance. They have ten or twelve guns of sorts in the Jelapla gorge, probably wall pieces, and these open fire whenever we go near that place, but no one has yet seen or heard any of the cannon balls from them.

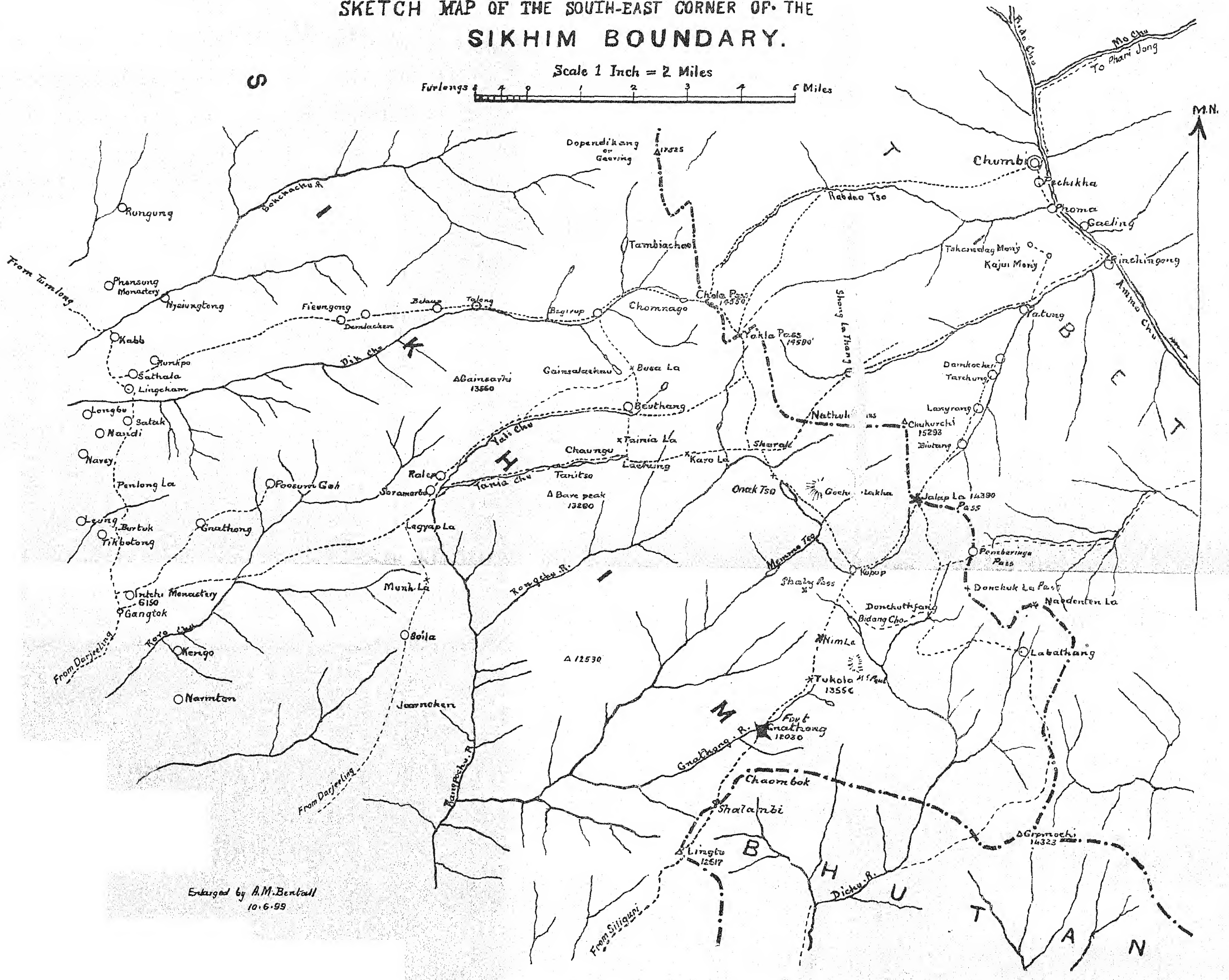
We have a clear day on the 15th, and it really looks like a break at last. The mules are therefore, ordered up to Shalambi, two miles off, and if we only get clear weather for a few days, we shall at last advance, and hope to finish off this war in a week or two.

The other half battalion under Major Lloyd, consisting of A, B, D, and F Companies, proceed to Darjeeling on the 17th September, and A Company, under Captain Etheridge, moves thence to Padong.

SKETCH MAP OF THE SOUTH-EAST CORNER OF THE SIK HIM BOUNDARY.

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Scale 1 Inch = 2 Miles
Furlongs 1 2 3 4 5 Miles



Enlarged by A.M. Bentall
10.6.99

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CHAPTER VIII.

Final preparations for an advance—Man lost in the jungle—Reconnaissance in force—Advance of the whole of the Thibetan army to the Tukola—Attack and defeat of Thibetans—Capture of Jelapla Pass—Pursuit, and capture of Rinchingong—Advance to Chumbi—Return to Gnatong—Fine weather and festivities.

SEPTEMBER 16th to 19th.—Every preparation is made for an advance should there be any signs of a final break in the rains, for which we are still waiting, a process, combined with the trying weather, which is beginning to tell somewhat on our naturally fine and even tempers. But it is too risky an operation to advance in this weather, and bivouac at 14,000 feet, with the chance of finding the morning of the attack wet and misty, and having to grope our way over an unknown and difficult country in the clouds.

It is the intention of General Graham to bivouac for the night on the Tukola, previous to attacking, and to advance with the first streak of dawn on the Jelapla. We have, therefore, sent out a lot of charcoal to the Tukola, in order to prepare some hot cocoa before starting on the morning of the attack; as, no doubt, when the day does come off, it will be a long and trying one, and it will be advisable to start on a full stomach.

We are longing to get this affair finished; most of us have had quite enough of suspense and waiting in the discomforts of Gnatong for the last six months. On the night of the 17th the Thibetans cut down some telegraph posts, which had been carried as far as the Nimla. They carried off some wire and insulators, but not much damage was done, as they can soon be replaced. They are, however, getting bolder, and

require a lesson. There is the usual rumour that they will attack us on the night of the 20th, when there will be a full moon, and that they have been reinforced by an army of 6000 Lamas. We all hope they will not fail to come, and the more the merrier. Our colonel has, we are sorry to say, been very seedy since his arrival here.

September 20th to 23rd.—One of our men, Private Hope, was found to be missing on the 20th. He had gone out shooting in the morning, and as he did not return search parties were sent out to look for him. It is not likely he is captured by the enemy, as he went in the other direction. It is feared he may have met with an accident and fallen down the khud. All efforts to find him were unavailing, until after 100 rupees reward had been offered for his discovery. He was eventually found senseless by some of the native political men on the 22nd, and brought in in a very exhausted condition, from some three or four miles down the hill side in the Bhutan jungles. He had a narrow escape of a lingering death by starvation.

On the 21st G Company Derbys and two guns went to the Nimla to reconnoitre, and discover the position of the enemies' guns. They were followed by some 400 of the Pioneers to work on the road, with a covering party of the Gurkhas. An early start was made, and on reaching the Tukola some fifty Thibetans were seen on the Nimla. They fired a few harmless volleys, and retired by a pass known as the Shaly Pass, to the left of the Nimla. On our reaching the Nimla, the Thibetans turned out in force, and crowned the hill tops on the opposite side of the valley. Half G Company went on to the Shaly Pass, and half went down the road to the Jelap, and fired a few volleys at some Thibetans, knocking over a few of them, on which all their guns, six in number, opened fire on us. They appeared to be posted along the lower wall in the Jelap gorge, and one or two up the hill side, on a steeply sloping hill on the left of the gorge we had

christened Tent Hill. Our guns replied from the Nimla, firing half-a-dozen shells at the enemy's position, one shrapnel bursting just over a group of about fifty of them, scattering them in all directions, and no doubt accounting for a good many. It was very amusing when we flashed a heliograph on some of them, in an interval of sunlight. They evidently thought something unusual was going to happen, as they laid down flat and took cover at once.

The Thibetans have started putting abattis in front of their walls, a new departure in field fortification for them, and no doubt cribbed from us.

On the 22nd the Thibetans made an attempt to surprise our Gurkha picquet, but came off second best. (This picquet goes up daily to the Tukola at dawn, and patrols as far as the Nimla.) On reaching the Nimla they found themselves nearly surrounded by Thibetans, who yelled at them, and opened fire on the Gurkhas at about 100 yards off only. The Gurkhas stood their ground and returned their fire, dropping two or three of them, who were carried off. The whole of the enemy then retired quickly down the Kupup road.

On the 23rd we were to have had a practice mule-loading parade, but were obliged to put it off on account of heavy rain.

September 24th.—Early this morning the most welcome and unexpected news was circulated, that the Thibetans had advanced during the night and were threatening the camp with an attack. At first none of us were inclined to believe the report, as this would be news almost too good to be true, and we thought that it was probably merely some more than usually enterprising Thibetan reconnoitring party taking a look at our fort from the top of the Tukola, and that they would soon retire on our morning picquet going out.

But on the picquet proceeding out as the light became clearer and objects became more distinct, it

was soon evident that the enemy were in great force and meant business, which they took no pains to conceal.

As the other side of the valley became visible, it was seen that the enemy lined the whole of the ridge from the right of the dip, leading towards Pemberingo, to some 800 yards to the left of the Tukola Pass, and what astonished us still more was that during the night they had built a huge loop-holed wall along the crest, some two miles long, and a large party of them were hard at work raising sangars on an eminence about 1000 yards nearer the fort, down the main Gnatong Valley, leading from Pemberingo.

It was pretty evident therefore, from the work they had done, that many thousands of them must be there; visual evidence too was not wanting, as masses of them could be seen through the glasses, drawn up behind their lengthy crescent-shaped wall, whilst every now and again volleys of their peculiar yells or war-cries would come ringing down the valley.

All was soon bustle and excitement in camp. The Thibetans had sold themselves, for we never dreamed that they would give up their vantage ground in the passes, and advance on Gnatong. They had, however, evidently got sick of waiting for us to attack them, and had determined on taking the initiative. Our patience was about to be rewarded, and we were at last about to have a reckoning for these months of weary waiting and damp discomfort.

The morning was unfortunately somewhat cloudy, with intervals of sunshine, and the promise of a clear day was uncertain.

At first we were uncertain whether the Thibetans intended attacking the fort at once, and accordingly the walls were manned, and we prepared to give them a warm reception. At about seven a.m. it became evident that we should have to go out and attack them, and preparations for an advance were therefore made. The baggage mules were sent for from Shalambi,

where they were kept, two miles in our rear, and in the meanwhile we packed up our twenty pounds of kit each, had our breakfast, and made our final preparations before leaving the camp.

It was 8.30 before everything was complete, and a general advance to attack ordered. The plan of attack ordered by General Graham was as follows. The attack was to be made in three columns.

The right column consisted of G Company Derby Regiment, two companies Pioneers, and two Pioneer guns, under Major Halkett of the Pioneers. This column was ordered to move up the South Gnatong valley to a place beyond Woodcock Hill, about one and a-half miles off, and whence a good position for the guns was obtainable, and to co-operate and advance towards Pemberingo on the other columns gaining the Tukola.

The centre column was composed of four companies of the Pioneers under Colonel Sir B. Bromhead, and was to advance straight up the road to the Tukola, timing its advance so as to arrive at the enemies' position at the same time as the left or main column.

The left or main column of attack, under General Graham himself, was composed of four guns 9-1 R.A. under Major Keith, C, E, and H Companies, with headquarters of Derbyshire Regiment, under Lieut.-Colonel McCleverty, and six companies of the 2nd 1st Gurkhas under Colonel Rogers. This column crossed the main Gnatong valley, and ascended on the right side of it so as to gain a high ridge running towards the Tukola, and almost on the same level as it, and from which a position could be gained enfilading the greater part of the Thibetan wall from Tukola to the Pemberingo saddle. This column had the longest distance to travel.

In order to describe the movements of the different columns, we will take them consecutively, as they all moved out from the fort simultaneously at 8.30 a.m. The baggage was left to be loaded by the men left

behind to guard the Gnatong fort, consisting of two companies Pioneers and a small guard of Derbys and Gurkhas under Major Goldney, with directions for it to follow on towards the Jelapla when sent for.

The right column had about the shortest route to traverse, and they reached the saddle where they had directions to halt at about ten a.m., the two 7-pounders under Lieutenant Tytler of the Pioneers coming into action, and being the first shots fired from our side. Their fire was directed against the Thibetan sangars down the main Gnatong valley, and excellent practice was made, the shells soon causing the Thibetans to evacuate that position, and retire towards their wall on the Pemberingo saddle. A few long range volleys from a section of G Company Derbys hastening their movement.

The mist came on very thick at this time, with a slight drizzle, obscuring all view to within a few hundred yards, and a halt of about an hour had to be made, waiting impatiently for orders, and longing for the clouds to lift and enable us to see what was going on.

The right column could plainly hear the other two columns engaged across the valley, from the continuous roar of firing and howls of the Thibetans in the direction of the Tukola, some 2000 yards off. At about eleven a.m. some Thibetans were observed firing at us from some rocks on the right, and Captain Wyllie and the right half of G Company were directed to turn them out. This they quickly did, and got in a few volleys at them with good effect as they retired towards Pemberingo. At about 11.30 it began to clear, and the enemy could be seen retiring from their position. The other two columns were in possession of the Tukola, and advancing, part towards the Nimla and part towards the Pemberingo, pouring in volley after volley on the retreating foe. Major Halkett now gave the order to advance, so a descent was made into the Gnatong valley, and the path

leading to the Pemberingo found. The Pemberingo saddle was reached at 12.30, a good many stragglers of the enemy being picked off on the way. There were a great many dead and wounded at the Pemberingo saddle, and Lieutenant Iggulden captured a fine pony, evidently from its trappings belonging to a chief of some note. At about 1.30 the centre column of the Pioneers arrived at the Pemberingo saddle, as they had orders to watch the Pemberingo Pass, having left the main body at the Nimla. Orders at the same time arrived for G Company Derbyshire to join the main body at the foot of the Jelapla with all speed, which it accordingly did.

The centre column, under Colonel Sir B. Bromhead, advanced up the main road to the Tukola, and having the easiest route to go by, they soon cleared off the advanced skirmishers of the Thibetans on their left front, and feeling their way cautiously through the mist and clouds, became engaged opposite the wall on the Tukola at about 10.15 a.m. The Thibetans evidently expected the main attack to be made by the centre column, as they had some four or five cannons or jingalls posted on their wall on the Tukola. The fire of these was soon silenced by the Pioneers, who fired volleys, and a further advance being made to within three hundred yards of the Tukola, a heavy independent fire was opened on the wavering Thibetans, and the Gurkhas arriving at the same time on the left along the ridge joining the Tukola, the wall was charged and taken.

The Thibetans now fled in all directions. The Pioneers, leading, went straight on towards the Nimla, accompanied by some Gurkhas, followed by the three companies Derbyshire Regiment and four guns of the 9-1 R.A. The remainder of the Gurkhas, some four companies, followed the wall towards Mount Paul and the Pemberingo, whither a large number of the Thibetans had retreated.

Colonel Sir B. Bromhead was as usual leading on

his men with his accustomed recklessness and bravery, and being mounted on a good hill pony, was first over the Tukola, and soon some way ahead of his corps, when he saw three Thibetans flying along the road in front of him. He pursued and overtook them, calling on them to surrender, and got off his pony to make one of them a prisoner, two Gurkhas having come up and caught the other two; when the Thibetan, seeing that Colonel Bromhead had not drawn his sword or revolver, suddenly drew his own sword, and slashed at him, nearly severing his right hand above the wrist, stabbed him in the groin, and inflicted a third severe cut on the left elbow. The Thibetan was bayoneted almost immediately by a Gurkha arriving on the scene. All were extremely distressed at the frightful injuries to Colonel Bromhead, who had been such a good friend to the Derbys, and was the most popular man in the camp, and much loved by all. The Pioneers, who had pursued as far as the Nimla, received orders to return by the ridge over Mount Paul to the Pemberingo saddle, and there to join the other two companies and watch the Pemberingo in case of a counter attack from that direction, whilst the assault was delivered on the Jelapla Pass. This was done, and joining their two other companies and two guns they bivouacked for the night near Mount Paul, without further active operations for that day.

The left and main column proceeded up a spur on the left of the lower camp, the Gurkhas in advance, followed by the guns and C, E, and H companies Derbyshire Regiment. They had a steep climb of 1500 feet before they gained the heights above, from which an advance could be made on the Tukola. Having gained the top, going was comparatively easy for some 1200 yards to the Tukola Pass. They were not long in covering this, and the Gurkhas on gaining sight of the Tukola, and hearing the Pioneers below them firing at it, after pouring in a few volleys, charged the wall simultaneously with the Pioneers.

They then followed the wall towards Mount Paul and the Pemberingo, where they gained on the Thibetans, and got to close quarters with them, doing great execution and killing over 200 of them, pursued them into the valley below.

Two of our guns, on reaching Tukola, took up a position on the left of it, and fired a few rounds on the retiring enemy; the other two guns and Derbyshire Regiment, with the General and headquarters staff, continuing on to the Nimla, where the Derbys poured in volleys on the flying enemy wherever seen.

At this phase of the action, the enemy being everywhere in retreat, the troops were reformed for an attack on the Jelapla Pass, where, if the enemy meant standing, we might expect the stiffest fighting to occur.

The Derbyshires now formed the advance party, followed by the guns and Gurkhas, and an advance was made to Kupup, at the mouth of the gorge leading to the Jelapla Pass. A slight halt was made here to give time for the Gurkhas to come up, and dispositions for the attack on the pass made.

The Derbyshire Regiment were to form for attack on the left side of the Jelapla stream, with the Gurkhas on the right of it with their own supports and reserve; two guns being posted on a spur running from the right of the gorge and commanding a good view of the lower and middle walls, the other two guns being posted towards the centre of the gorge, and looking further up towards the top of the pass.

At first the enemy seemed inclined to make a stand, and opened fire on us with their cannon and match-locks from the lower walls, and the heights on our left. When, however, our guns opened fire, and they saw us steadily advancing in a long line across the valley, their hearts failed them, and they fled pell mell up the valley and over the pass, leaving all their camp standing. Our guns sent shell and shrapnel

screaming up the frowning gorge against the first and second wall, and the booming of the guns and bursting of the shells, with their accompanying reverberation and echoes up the stupendous bare rocky mountains, must have struck terror into the Thibetan hordes. Their defeat was now complete, and they never gave us a chance of getting near them, but fled over the pass as fast as their legs could carry them, and faster than ours could follow. At 3.30 p.m. we had gained the lower wall and camp; E and H Companies being extended, forming the fighting line, supported by C and G in reserve. The Gurkhas were similarly extended on our left.

After taking the lower wall, behind which we found some 100 tents and a lot of baggage, the advance was continued against the second line of sangars. The road so far had been of a fairly easy gradient, but just before reaching the second line of fortifications, it ascended sharply up a steep cliff of a couple of hundred feet in height with a gradient of one in three, and this would have been an exceedingly awkward place to have attacked in the face of any opposition, as the front up which a passage was possible was very constricted. However, the enemy were thoroughly cowed, and with the exception of a few wounded Thibetans, not a soul was seen. Here were also found about 100 tents, with more baggage and provisions.

The road from this to the top of the pass, 14,390 feet high, was easy and open. The pass being cleared, a halt was made a little further on in a sheltered hollow, and preparations made to bivouac for the night, as evening was coming on apace, it being six p.m. A third Thibetan encampment was then discovered, which was not previously known of, being hidden from view by a shoulder of the mountain; and being near the top of the pass, seemed to be the main Thibetan camp, containing about 150 tents, fresh meat, provisions, clothing, and cooking utensils, &c.

We managed to collect a little fuel for a fire before nightfall, and waited, tired out and done to a turn, after ten hours climbing and fighting, for our baggage to come up.

Through some mistake of a signaller in rear, and the transport officer having been galloping about with the General, watching the fight, the baggage did not arrive till two a.m., putting the troops to very great discomfort and inconvenience, as in the meanwhile it had come on to drizzle and sleet, and it is no joke bivouacking in the open, or under a cold rock, at an elevation of getting on for 15,000 feet, in freezing wind and sleet, with nothing but a khaki coat to protect one.

Most of us were so thoroughly tired out, that we lay down and were asleep in five minutes, and although we had only about half-an-hour's sleep before the cold woke us, the wonderful air of these altitudes, and being inured to hardship, we woke somewhat refreshed and were able to summon strength to go on to the Thibetan camp above us, and bring down what tents, blankets, and sheep skins we could find, in which we wrapped ourselves and laid ourselves down to a well earned rest. We were thus enabled to get some sleep and prepare ourselves for the morrow, though food we had none. I have once before mentioned that the Thibetan is a filthy beast, and on waking the next morning we found ourselves covered with lice from the skins and blankets we had wrapped ourselves in, and for the next two days, until we were able to boil our clothes and disinfect our hair, we had an unpleasant and scratchy time of it.

September 25th.—The morning broke clear, crisp, and frosty, and we were not long in getting some hot cocoa and a comfortable breakfast, as we were all famishingly hungry. The mules had arrived in the small hours of the morning, and the foresight of the mess president, Lieutenant Iggulden, was duly appreciated by the Derby and other officers at the good cheer and provender forthcoming. For whatever

discomforts we had to undergo, and they were many, the Derbyshire Regiment always managed to have a good mess going at which to entertain their friends.

Feeling much refreshed, and thankful that the prospect of the day's march did not lead up hill, we made a start at eight a.m., our objective being the town of Rinchiongong at the bottom of the Chumbi valley, some eight miles off. C Company of the Derbys, under Captain Godley, formed the advanced guard, followed by G, H, and E Companies, four guns 9-1 R.A., and six companies of the 2nd-1st Gurkhas.

The road to the top of the pass was easy, and on reaching the summit, 14,390 feet high, we found the wall built by the Thibetans along it to be a flimsy affair, and nothing like as substantial as the lower ones.

We are now at an altitude probably never before attained by any body of British soldiers, and a short halt of a few minutes was made to give us breath after the short climb, and to admire the superb view laid before us.

Looking north towards Thibet the panorama of valley and mountain was grand in the extreme. The atmosphere was beautifully transparent, and the bright, grassy valleys of Chumbi, with a glistening range of dazzling snow beyond, in the middle of which towered the upright lordly cone of Chumalari, 26,000 feet high, backed by a sky of the purest azure, formed a view not to be surpassed in all the lovely scenes of nature's landscapes.

Stern matters had, however, to be attended to, and the order to advance soon distracted our attention from the impressive scene before us. Our eyes were required for other uses than that of admiring the beauty of nature. The path became rough and stony, and we were soon descending like an immense caterpillar in single file down the steep zig-zag path across the frontier of Thibet, and into the forbidden land. There was a small deep black mountain lake

some few hundred feet below the summit of the pass, on reaching which the road was fairly level for a bit, and then again made a very rapid descent to the stream in the valley beneath.

There was plenty of evidence that parties of flying Thibetans were immediately in front of us. Smouldering fires and cooking utensils were found by the road side, and now and again an occasional shot by C Company's scouts would hurry on some fugitive who had stayed too long, two or three of them being killed. They, however, seemed to be only stragglers, as no resistance was offered to our march.

Our progress was necessarily slow, as, after descending some 1500 feet, the road entered a forest and the path was bad, besides which caution had to be observed to prevent the chance of falling into an ambush.

On nearing Rinchingong, the road crossed and recrossed the stream several times, and we found the bridges over it had been destroyed, and had to cross as best we could, by a log or single plank, whilst the mules in rear had to ford.

Approaching Rinchingong, after a descent of some 5000 feet, several Thibetans were seen coming down a spur on the opposite side of the valley, apparently from the direction of Pemberingo, whilst a few more were observed on our side. These latter were soon cleared off, and on fire being opened on those on the opposite side of the valley, they turned aside to the other direction, fleeing into Bhutan.

The outskirts of Rinchingong village were reached at 2.30 p.m., and the village itself was charged with fixed bayonets by the two leading companies of the Derbyshire Regiment, as it was thought it might be occupied by the enemy. No opposition was, however, offered, and with the exception of several wounded, and an old woman, the village was deserted.

We found the village of Rinchingong to consist of about twenty very substantial two-storeyed houses,

well built of stone and plaster, with large and clean rooms, not at all resembling the ordinary native mud village of India. There were also several other houses on the other side of the rapid river Mochu, the bridge over which had been destroyed. The whole place had a well-to-do look, which was not belied by the contents of the houses and their surroundings. Fields of turnips, neat little ricks of grain, several cows with calves, and a few ponies were among the things first observed, whilst the bright and smiling valley of Chumbi, with the rushing river Mochu flowing down it, formed a pleasant contrast to the dank country on our side of the Jelapla.

The troops were billeted off in the different houses, which we were at liberty to loot, and not a little curious spoil was obtained. We found a large quantity of arms, gunpowder, and other munitions of war about, and Lieutenant Temple with H Company discovered a handsome 6-pounder brass cannon, since presented to the Battalion by Lord Curzon, Viceroy of India. There were many other curious objects discovered, and if we could only have transported all we found with us, we should not have done badly.

There were three or four Chinese officials on the opposite side of the river, who opened communication with us, and said they had been sent by the Chinese Amba or Resident at Lhasa to stop the fight. Fortunately for us their mediations had been of no avail with the pig-headed Lamas, or else they had arrived too late. They notified that the Chinese Amba had left Lhasa, and was on his way here, and should arrive in about a fortnight, when the preliminaries of peace should be at last definitely settled.

The village was put in a state of defence, picquets being placed round it to guard against a possible surprise, E Company taking the south and east side, with the Gurkhas on the north and west. I think we found our quarters that night the most

comfortable we have occupied since starting on the expedition, and the troops enjoyed a hearty meal and a perfect night's rest on good clean straw, with a sound roof over their heads, and in a warmer and drier climate than we have experienced for some time. In fact no one now wonders at the Rajah of Sikkim's preference to living in this valley to residing in his own territory.

September 26.—After a most refreshing night's sleep we were up at daybreak, and having packed our kits and breakfasted, started at nine a.m. to march to Chumbi, G Company forming the advance guard.

Our baggage was sent back about two miles towards the Jelapla, to a place where we intended to return and bivouac for the night, though we all wondered why, having got to such good quarters, we were to bolt back to Gnatong again. The road to Chumbi lay along the bottom of the valley, and was close to the river, and level all the way. The weather was lovely, the scenery perfect, and every one felt in the highest of spirits. Marching along the flat seemed almost like treading on air, after toiling up and down rugged and precipitous mountain sides.

After going about a mile we met the Chinese Envoys bearing a white flag. They had crossed the river by a bridge higher up, and had come round for an interview. Nothing of importance occurred during the march. A couple of armed Thibetans were shot as they bolted out of a village half-way, and a few armed men were seen on the other side of the river. On nearing Chumbi we were met by the Rajah's Diwan, or Prime Minister, who informed us that the Rajah's mother was in the palace. He gave no news of the Rajah, although we had heard that he had been in Rinchiongong forty-eight hours before. He said the Thibetan rout had been complete, and that 2000 of them had fled towards Phari as hard as they could go immediately after the battle.

We found the Rajah's palace at Chumbi to be a large three-storeyed rambling building, situated close to the right bank of the Mochu, which was here spanned by a bridge built on the cantilever system. The palace walls were surrounded by a row of vertically placed prayer wheels, and these ingenious contrivances were placed at every convenient spot, so that the passer-by might give them a twist without trouble, and so add a few thousand extra prayers to his own or somebody else's credit.

The troops were drawn up outside the palace, and the General and staff and one or two officers entered the building, and were received by the Dowager Rani and her two grandchildren in state. The original idea in marching to Chumbi had been to loot and burn the Rajah's palace, but the Political Officer begged that this might be foregone and the Rajah given another chance to come in, as his mother-in-law and children were there with all their people. One could not help admiring the old lady for her pluck in remaining to meet conquering troops, and of whom she could have known nothing, and from whom, according to her countrymen's usage, little courtesy might be expected. The Rani received us sitting, in a large room or private chapel, fitted up with a shrine at one end of it, gorgeously painted, and got up with embroidered scrolls, with a large brass image of Bhudda in the centre of it. The Rani herself was a middle-aged woman, with a bright and cheerful face, and was also wonderfully arrayed, having on a remarkable head-dress, going some two and a half feet over her head, in the shape of a large horse collar, and studded with pearls, corals, and very handsome turquoise, a truly wonderful work of art, and somewhat of a burden to carry on one's head for any length of time. The Rani was about forty-five years of age, and had evidently been good-looking when young. She seemed of a cheerful disposition, and, accepting the destiny of fate, did not appear to mind in the slightest our ransacking

the palace for the Rajah's papers, laughing and cracking jokes with her attendants, whilst ever and anon she took a sip of the "Craythur," or something uncommonly like it, to keep her spirits up. She hospitably handed round some of this liquor in beautiful small china cups; on tasting it we found it to be a strongish fiery spirit, not unpleasant to the taste, partaking somewhat of the character of raw whisky. We took away all the papers belonging to the Rajah which were likely to be of interest, and retired outside the palace, much regretting we could not loot the place, which was rich with valuable and curious china, costly arms, and all sorts of quaint curiosities. Word was left for the Rajah to report himself in person at Gnatong during the next four days, or it would go badly with him. We have not much doubt that he was hidden away in the palace or its vicinity, and that had we burnt the palace he would have shown up. With a sigh at what might have been, we commenced our return march, and reached Rinchingong again at two p.m.

A halt was made here for a short time, after which the whole of the troops, with the exception of G Company Derbys, went on to their camping ground, two miles towards the Jelapla. G Company under Captain Wylly remained behind, partly as an escort to Mr. Paul, the Political Officer, who wished to have a further interview with the Chinese officials, and also to destroy several tons of gunpowder which were unearthed. We emptied some 300 boxes of gunpowder into the river, and Mr. Paul having finished his business, we reached our bivouac at about 5.30 p.m., bringing along as much loot as we could carry and four captured ponies.

It came on to rain at six p.m. and we were very disgusted at leaving Rinchingong, where the troops would have liked to have stayed for some time, or until peace was concluded. However, we rigged up what shelter we could with waterproof sheets slung

over a pole on two forked sticks, which made a very respectable Tente D'Abri, and we all spent a tolerably comfortable night notwithstanding the drizzle. G Company was on night picquet, and they captured one Thibetan, allowing several others to escape, as they did not wish to alarm the camp by firing on them.

September 27th. A damp morning with a cold drizzle, and it was in no amiable mood that we turned out at daybreak, and prepared for the stiff march back to Gnatong, with a rise of 5000 feet in the first few miles of it over an execrable road. However, our worthy commander had decided that a long stay at Rinchingong was inadvisable, and so a start was made at 6 a.m., G Company, Derbyshire Regiment, forming the rear guard. The broken bridges over the stream had been repaired by the invaluable Pioneers, so we got along at a respectable pace, though the road was awful in places for loaded mules over the steep places, and the rear guard had an arduous day of it. After seven hours' steady marching we neared the top of the pass, and reached the summit at about two p.m. We found it bitterly cold, with sleet falling, and a cutting wind blowing.

It had been intended to bivouac on the pass, but the General, finding we had surmounted it so much earlier than was expected, and it being the universal wish of every one, determined to push on to Gnatong that day, and accordingly when G Company, the rear guard, arrived at the top of the pass, the other troops had proceeded on. Orders had been left for the rear guard to follow after seeing all the baggage over the pass, and if necessary to bivouac on the pass, should they be unable to get on that night, not a pleasant prospect, as it continued to sleet, and cold winds chilled our very marrow.

However, by five p.m. all the baggage had got well on its way, and G Company was enabled to follow on to Gnatong, where it arrived some three hours after

dark, stumbling and hobbling over the stony path in the dark, and tired to death, with aching feet and limbs, after fourteen hours marching over rocks, and loading and adjusting packs on tired mules.

We were too done up to do anything more than to take off our accoutrements and lie down to sleep like inanimate beings till late the next day, when we awoke refreshed and ravenously hungry.

Such was the capture of the Jelapla Pass and final dispersal of the Thibetan Army from the border of our frontier. The advisability of immediately returning to Gnatong, as we did, to await further developments was open to much doubt, and the consensus of opinion at the time was dead against it. Previous experience had shown us that the Thibetans regarded our remaining passively at Gnatong as a sign of fear or weakness on our part, and one would have thought that our foes could much more quickly be brought to their senses by an occupation of their territory, and if necessary a further advance into it to the town of Phari, than remaining passively cooped up in Gnatong to await the arrival of the Chinese and Thibetans, to come in at their own pleasure or not as it suited them.

However, here we were back again in the old spot, without even the excitement of a possible enemy for some time at least. The Thibetans had no doubt had a lesson, which would last them for the next fifty years, as their losses must have been about 1500 killed and wounded, about 450 of whom were left dead on the field. We heard many years afterwards, when Major Bower of the 17th B.C. travelled from India, through Thibet, to China, that the Thibetans still remembered their defeat at Gnatong, where they said their losses had amounted to 1800 men, and they were proportionately afraid of interfering with a white man accordingly, and gave Major Bower and his party a respectful passage through their part of the country.

CHAPTER IX.

Rest after our fatigue—Autumn at Gnatong—Arrival of the Rajah of Sikkim—Cake competition—Preparations to winter at Gnatong—Skating—Hut building—Arrival of Chinese Amban—Christmas festivities—The Connaught Rangers relieve the Derbys at Gnatong—Proceed to quarters at Jubbulpore—Inspection by his Excellency the Commander-in-Chief, Sir Frederick Roberts, G.C.B.—Conclusion.

THE excitement of the prospect of further fighting being over, we are now enabled to rest somewhat after our recent fatigues, and the duties of day and night picquets are not so onerous. The native troops are busy burying the dead, and we have about 180 Thibetan prisoners on our hands, in addition to many wounded. A great trade in loot goes on, and many of the swords, guns, and illuminated scrolls captured at Rinchingong are very handsome. The sawyers and coolies who followed the troops after the battle must have got a great deal of loot, as the dead were found stripped of even their clothes on our return from Chumbi.

The monsoon seems to be at last over, and the days and nights are clear and crisp, and there is a frost at night, with a distinctly autumnal feeling in the air. Very much pleasanter than the months of wet and damp we have passed through. Our Colonel and Quartermaster, Lieut.-Colonel McCleverty and Lieutenant Fox, have to be sent down to Darjeeling, both having been far from fit since their arrival at Gnatong. We have the trouble of pulling down the walls the Thibetans have built in the Jelapla and Pemberingo Passes, and destroying their fortifications. We are also much exercised what they have done

with their guns, which it is suspected they must have abandoned, and probably thrown down some precipice or into one of the mountain tarns. All search for them is, however, futile, and beyond the gun captured in Rinchingong by H Company, and a jingall, or wall piece, also found by H Company, none other of their guns are discovered.

On the 1st of October there was a slight fall of snow on the Tukola, which looks like the approach of winter. On the 2nd October the Rajah of Sikkim came in with a small following. He is a repulsive-looking man with a hare-lip, and looked very much ashamed of himself. He is to be sent back to Tumlong, his capital, where he will be placed under surveillance.

On the 4th October the officers of the Derbyshire Regiment gave a big dinner to the General and staff and heads of departments at their mess hut, to celebrate the victory. It was a great success. The mess hut was gorgeously decorated with loot, flowers, trophies of arms, &c., whilst the mess president's catering and the Darjeeling Club champagne were undeniable. Many were the right good songs and merry jests before we broke up in the small hours of the morning. We now have frequent football and sports to amuse the men, and a great rifle meeting is in contemplation. Camp-fire sing-songs are of weekly occurrence, and the rain having ceased, life is more enjoyable than formerly. Leave to Darjeeling is talked of, and we are managing to make the remainder of our stay here as pleasant as possible.

The cake competition mentioned in a previous chapter afforded us a good deal of amusement, and was quite a success. There were many cakes sent up, an afternoon was set apart, and all the officers of the force were invited to come and vote on the merits of the cakes. Where all were so good, it was hard to decide which should get the prize, but eventually it was settled to every one's satisfaction which were the

three best cakes, and two extra prizes were given on account of the unexpected number of cakes that arrived. On sending in the numbers into Darjeeling to find out who the fair prize winners were, it was discovered that the first prize had been won by a most popular lady in the regiment, which was quite as it ought to have been, and a most popular win. Our cake competition proved such a success, that the headquarters staff thought that they would go one better, and offered a diamond ring for the best hamper sent up. After long days of anxious waiting, one hamper was said to have arrived, but who the solitary competitor was, what the contents of the hamper were, and whether she ever got her diamond ring, are questions that are still waiting for an authentic reply.

On the 11th of October the three companies of the Derbys at Darjeeling returned to Dum Dum. When the headquarters companies at Gnatong will return to India is still a matter for conjecture. In the meantime, signs of winter at Gnatong are fast coming on, and preparations for improving the hutting and making it of a more substantial form are going on apace. Two engineer officers have been ordered up, Captain Stanton and Lieutenant Sandbach, and the Derbys are hard at work building substantial huts with double plank sides filled with moss, and stone ends with fire places.

We have had frost every night, and the inundation is nightly frozen, and it is expected we shall soon have skating, and anxious inquiries are made as to where skates are obtainable in India. One of our officers telegraphed to Calcutta for a pair, and in due course received by post, to his disappointment and disgust, a pair of roller skates, not quite the article he required.

The long-looked-for arrival of the Chinese Amban has again been postponed, and we wonder when he will really come. In the meantime the

road from Darjeeling to Gnatong has been vastly improved by the Public Works Department, and a few of us are able to ride our loot-ponies into Darjeeling for a ten days' change.

On the 12th November Major Maxwell arrived from Darjeeling to take over command of the regiment, Lieutenant-Colonel McCleverty having been very ill indeed in hospital. Skating is now a great source of amusement, and is in full swing, as we get twenty degrees of frost nightly. Several pairs of skates have been obtained, and the handy Pioneers have improvised several more from the backs of Thibetan sword blades. Tommy and Jack Sepoy may be seen daily disporting themselves on the ice, to the wonderment of the native of Sikkim and the Bhutia coolie. Some of the small lakes in the Jelapla Pass are frozen over like polished glass, and the skating on them is as good as could be wished for.

We are all very glad to hear that Colonel Bromhead, who had been so badly wounded in the last fight, is progressing most favourably, though he had to have one hand amputated and the bone in the elbow joint of the other arm removed, besides having a third dangerous wound in his groin.

Mr. Ney Elias, another Political Officer, arrives at Gnatong to assist to conduct the pending negotiations with the Chinese Amba, from whom news was received that he had left Lhasa on November 1st, and should arrive at Gnatong about the middle of December. Subsequently news was received by two Chinese emissaries who arrived at Gnatong on November 24th, saying the Amba had left Lhasa on the 19th November, arriving at Giantze, ten marches off, on the 24th November, which would make Lhasa only some sixteen marches off, or considerably less than most people thought.

November 25th to 30th.—The nights are now getting exceedingly cold, with twenty-five to thirty

degrees of frost, and all our ink, milk, beer, &c., is frozen to a solid block in the mornings.

News is received that we are to be relieved by the 88th Connaught Rangers, though the date is not as yet fixed. We do not envy them, as the rigours and discomforts of winter at Gnatong, from our experience in March and April, promise to be anything but pleasant.

The Pioneers returned to Padong on the 4th December, and the guns and headquarters of the Gurkhas returned to Rhenok on 8th and 10th December. On 12th December A Company Derbys, under Captain Etheridge, arrive from Padong, and there only remain as a garrison to Gnatong the five companies Derbyshire Regiment, two companies Gurkhas, and some artificers of the 32nd Pioneers.

The native troops have begun to suffer from the hardships of the climate, and there was a good deal of bronchitis and lung complaint amongst them. Our men have been wonderfully fit, and the cold and bracing climate of these lofty altitudes had agreed with them extremely well; our losses from disease had been almost nil. We have taken over charge of the two small mountain guns from the Pioneers, and now have an expert gun detachment under Lieutenant Lewarne, who are uncommonly smart in handling their guns, and make excellent practice.

December 16th to 20th.—Every one is now looking forward to the arrival of the Amba. Parties of Chinese have been arriving daily, and on 19th December some 200 Thibetan coolies arrived bringing part of his camp, and commenced pitching it on the opposite side of the main Gnatong valley. Some of the tents are very picturesque and quaint, with neat designs in red and blue worked on them. The round tents called "Kebitska" are very roomy and comfortable when pitched, having no centre pole, being pitched on a sort of trellis-work frame.

Early on the morning of December 21st, Chinese

soldiers and Thibetan coolies, with quantities of baggage, came streaming over the Tukola Pass, to the Amba's camp, and about nine a.m. the Amba's secretary and adjutant, each with an escort with flags and guns, arrived, and notified to Mr. Paul, the Political, that the long-looked for Amba himself would arrive about two p.m. The Chinese seemed an intelligent lot of men, cleaner, better dressed, and of a superior type to the Thibetans. They were much surprised at the skating going on, and also at looking at a watch, and through a telescope.

The arrival of the Amba at about 2.30 p.m. was a most picturesque and theatrical scene. He was preceded by a guard of Chinese soldiers mounted on mules, wearing a red uniform and armed with a kind of halberd, with triangular-shaped, multi coloured flags, with strange devices on them, and the effect of the procession winding down the Tukola Pass, in the bright sun, backed by the snow-clad mountains was very striking. The Amba himself was carried in a green sedan chair, lined throughout with silver fox skins and carried by about a dozen bearers, whilst both before and behind the chair were long drag ropes, to which were harnessed some sixty coolies to assist in carrying him up the steep hills.

On nearing his camp he was met by a guard of honour of Gurkhas under a native officer, and a salute of three guns from the fort above. He had also a band of his own with him, who blew blasts from long copper trumpets, accompanied by an instrument somewhat resembling in sound a bag-pipe. A hut had been prepared for him in his camp, and he was there met at the entrance by a sergeant's guard of the Derbys and the Political Officer. The Amba is a middle-aged man somewhat inclined to corpulency. Refreshments of tea, champagne, &c., were provided for him, and the usual ceremonies of introduction and inquiries after his health, and the comforts of his journey, having

been gone through, our people retired to the fort, leaving the Great Man to settle down in his own camp.

The Amba's camp has now a very picturesque appearance, looking very gay, with over a hundred multicoloured and quaint-shaped tents, whilst the number of his followers must be over 1000, with 500 mules.

On the following day, the 21st December, the Amba paid a return visit in state, accompanied by a salute fired by bombs being exploded, and also by his band and a pretty-looking young boy of about twelve years old, who is always in constant attendance.

On the 24th Mr. Durand, C.S.I., Foreign Secretary to the Government of India, arrives, and negotiations are opened and daily consultations take place between our officials and the Chinese in the old mess house of the Gurkhas. The progress of these continuous negotiations is kept very dark by the Politicals, though two naughty men of one of our companies are said to have concealed themselves underneath the hollow floor of the mess hut and to have heard a good deal more than they were intended to.

We spent Christmas Day in the time-honoured way, and a very merry time we had of it, notwithstanding our exile and the great distance and difference in surroundings between us and our friends and families. Anyhow, seasonable weather was not wanting, and great trouble had been expended in providing the men with excellent dinners, washed down by capital beer obtained from Darjeeling.

We have had great trouble in building the stone end walls of our new winter huts, as the frost cracks them, and down they tumble, in addition to which a sharp shock of earthquake took place on the 23rd December, which did a lot of damage. However, by dint of much skill in building them up, and making large buttresses, they are at last made to stand up.

We gave a dinner on New Year's Eve to all the officers at Gnatong, which turned out to be a very festive affair.

In the New Year's honours Mr. Paul, the political officer, gets a C.I.E., and the Tyndook Palgar is created a Rajah, for their exertions in the Sikkim campaign. We wonder what we soldiers, who have borne the brunt of the campaign, are to get out of it, as so far the only officer of the regiment who has been mentioned in General Graham's despatch on the action of the 24th September was Lieutenant-Colonel McCleverty, commanding the regiment. About January 12th there was a rumour that a good many Thibetans were again collecting in the Chumbi valley. On the Amba being questioned about it, and asked if they would again attack us, he replied, "No! Do you think it likely that they will return to the top of the hill for the pleasure of being shot down?"

Negotiations have, however, come to a dead lock, and the Amba has informed our Politicals that the Thibetans will not come to terms, unless we recognise their right to the suzerainty of Sikkim, which is, of course, impossible. So for the present things are as undecided as ever, and it is ten thousand pities we did not remain in the Chumbi valley, which would soon have brought the Thibetans to their senses. The policy of sitting still in warfare with savage tribes has never been, nor ever will be, of any good whatever in settling disputes.

On the 12th January, 1889, a party of Chinese left for Rhenok, to see the Rushet river, which the Thibetans claim as their boundary. On passing Lingtu they remarked, "If the Thibetans were unable to stop you at a place like this, it was very little use their trying to do so anywhere else."

On the 16th January a fall of snow lasting forty-eight hours altered the complexion of affairs considerably, and the Arctic pall which now stretches

all around, above, and below us has settled down to stay for the next four or five months.

Our sojourn at Gnatong is, however, fast drawing to a close, and after nearly a year of it, we shall step off down the hill with a light heart, to the warmth of the Indian plains and cantonment life at Jubbulpore.

We have to clear the snow off the road to Lingtu to render it practicable, as there is now some five feet of it all over the hills in the vicinity of Gnatong.

On the 6th February two officers of the 88th arrive to take over the fort and buildings, and on the 8th February, 1889, 400 men of that regiment, with nine more officers, arrived to garrison the place and relieve us.

On February 9th we marched out of Gnatong on our return to India, bidding farewell to ice-bound Gnatong with a glad heart. Silligori was reached on the 16th, and we found ourselves once again in cantonments at Jubbulpore on the 22nd of February, some of the companies having completed almost a year at the front and experienced exceptionally hard and rough work. For it is fully acknowledged on all sides that this comparatively small campaign on the Thibetan frontier compares favourably, as regards actual hard work and hardship, with any since the Crimea.

On the 23rd February, the day after marching into Jubbulpore, the Battalion was inspected by his Excellency the Commander-in-Chief in India, General Sir Frederick Roberts, G.C.B., K.C.S.I., the regiment turning out without a single absentee, in their campaigning khaki dress, and in the presence of the whole garrison. At the conclusion of the parade his Excellency, in the presence of the troops in garrison, thus addressed the regiment:—"Officers and men of the Derbyshire Regiment, I am very pleased to have this opportunity of inspecting you. I was not able to go as far as Gnatong the other day when I was in Sikkim, but from everybody I saw in Sikkim I heard

the most favourable reports of your behaviour—that you were cheerful under great hardships, always ready for work, and very well conducted. This I heard wherever I went, and I am very glad to tell you so, and to congratulate Colonel McCleverty and the Officers of the regiment on having such a well-behaved body of men under their command.”

This was a fitting conclusion to our year's campaigning in the lofty altitudes of the Thibetan frontier. To receive the high praise of one of India's greatest commanders-in-chief was most gratifying to us all. Our experience during the Sikkim campaign had been unique, for it had never before fallen to the lot of British troops to undergo prolonged operations at an altitude of over 12,000 feet. The inseparable hardships of such a campaign in a most difficult country, with its cold in the winter months and excessive damp and rain in the summer months, cannot be overrated. They had been borne by the men with the greatest cheerfulness and patience, often under extremely trying circumstances, for it would be difficult to find in the annals of British warfare anything more tedious and trying than the months of enforced waiting we had to undergo on the dreary heights of Gnatong.

This account of the history of the 2nd Battalion of the Derbyshire Regiment in the Sikkim Campaign is written from a purely regimental point of view, being intended as a record and account of the doings of the Derbyshire Regiment only. Our comrades the native troops who served with us bore equally with ourselves the attendant fatigues and hardships of the campaign, especially that fine regiment the 32nd Pioneers, a regiment of Muzbee Sikhs, under that splendid old soldier Colonel Sir Benjamin Bromhead, who did invaluable work from beginning to end of the campaign; as also our gallant friends and comrades the 2nd Battalion 1st Gurkhas, under Lieut.-Colonel Rogers, who fought alongside of us in their maiden

fight at the final advance over the Jelapla, on the 24th of September, and with whom we were again, ten years later, to renew our acquaintance and be brigaded with in the Tirah Campaign.

In the appendices will be found a nominal roll of the Officers and Sergeants of the Regiment who took part in the Sikkim Campaign, together with the only despatch published by General Graham on the operations. This despatch treats mainly with the final action of the 24th September, subsequent capture of the Jelapla Pass, and pursuit into Thibet.

It was thought that a final despatch, dealing with the whole campaign, would have been published, and in which mention would have been made of the previous actions and nine months hardship endured by the troops; but for some reason or other, although it is believed a final despatch *was* duly sent in to headquarters, it was never published to the world at large, which was certainly disappointing to the Officers of the force, who had spent the best part of a year at the front and borne the brunt of the hardships of the campaign from beginning to end.

APPENDIX A.

Roll of Officers, Colour-Sergeants, and Sergeants who
took part in the Sikkim Campaign.

Lieutenant-Colonel J. McCleverty.	
Major T. M. Maxwell (did not receive the medal).	
Major J. W. F. Hume.	
Captain H. C. Wyll.	
Captain F. C. Godley.	
Captain E. A. G. Gosset.	
Captain A. A. Etheridge (died in England in 1896).	
Lieutenant H. J. Bowman.	
Lieutenant L. A. M. Stopford (Adjutant).	
Lieutenant G. E. Temple.	
Lieutenant H. A. Iggulden.	
Lieutenant A. A. I. Heyman.	
Lieutenant R. Granville (died at Jubbulpore in 1892).	
Lieutenant J. W. G. Roy (did not receive the medal).	
Lieutenant N. A. Lewarne (killed in Tirah Campaign, Nov., 1897).	
Lieutenant W. Fox (Quartermaster).	
No. 85 Colour-Sergeant W. Heapy.....	A Company.
No. 747 Sergeant H. Taylor.....	"
No. 2325 Sergeant J. Finn (no medal).....	"
No. 865 Colour-Sergeant J. H. Dorans.....	C Company.
No. 833 Sergeant C. Johnson.....	"
No. 795 Sergeant J. Milward.....	"
No. 2375 Sergeant J. Haygreen (no medal).....	"
No. 951 Colour-Sergeant J. L. G. McKinnon.....	E Company.
No. 1246 Sergeant J. Elliot.....	"
No. 2839 Sergeant J. Parr.....	"
No. 1268 Sergeant A. Smith.....	"
No. 2483 Sergeant T. Wakefield.....	"
No. 1956 Colour-Sergeant T. Collins.....	G Company.
No. 2585 Sergeant R. Gray.....	"
No. 745 Sergeant H. McCullough.....	"
No. 2619 Sergeant L. Seckington.....	"
No. 2590 Sergeant W. Packer.....	"
No. 1053 Sergeant Windebank.....	"
No. 1750 Sergeant L. Damon.....	"
No. 927 Colour-Sergeant D. Denihan	H Company.
No. 1897 Sergeant J. Fenton.....	"
No. 2618 Sergeant J. Hegarty.....	"
No. 4204 Sergeant J. Hicken.....	"
No. 1419 Sergeant F. Priestly.....	"
No. 2646 Sergeant D. Tansey.....	"
No. 323 Sergeant W. Walters.....	"

Fifteen officers and 472 non-commissioned officers and men received the Indian Frontier medal, with clasp, for "Sikkim, 1888." The medals were presented to the regiment by Brigadier-General O. Barnard, C.B., commanding the Nerbudda District, at a brigade parade, on 7th April, 1890, the two companies on detachment at Saugor receiving theirs on 9th April, 1890.

APPENDIX B.

BRIGADIER-GENERAL T. GRAHAM'S DESPATCH.

GENERAL ORDERS.

MILITARY DEPARTMENT.

Simla, the 2nd November, 1888.

FIELD OPERATIONS.

SIKKIM.

No. 889.—His Excellency the Viceroy and Governor-General in Council is pleased to direct the publication of the subjoined letter from the Adjutant-General in India, submitting, under the orders of the Commander-in-Chief in India, a despatch from Brigadier-General T. Graham, commanding the Sikkim Field Force, reporting the particulars of his defeat of the Tibetan Army in the neighbourhood of Gnathong, in Sikkim, on the 24th September, 1888, and the subsequent pursuit to the Chambi valley.

2. The Governor-General in Council entirely concurs in the approval expressed by the Commander-in-Chief of the excellent manner in which Brigadier-General Graham has exercised the command of the Sikkim Field Force throughout the operations in that country, and especially in regard to the skill evinced by him in seizing the right moment for assuming the offensive, and the vigour and ability with which the attack was carried out, resulting in the complete defeat and dispersion of the enemy, with very small loss to the British troops.

3. His Excellency in Council desires to convey the cordial acknowledgments of the Government of India to Brigadier-General Graham and the officers and troops under his command, whose conduct, not only throughout the operations but during the whole period of the expedition, under circumstances of unusual climatic severity, merits high commendation.

From Major-General W. K. Elles, C.B., Adjutant-General in India, to the Secretary to the Government of India, Military Department,—(No. 5570A, dated Simla, 16th October, 1888).

I have the honour, by direction of the Commander-in-Chief in India, to submit, for the informa-

No. 147, dated 2nd October, 1888.
tion of the Government of India, a despatch, as per margin, from Brigadier-General T. Graham, Commanding the Sikkim Expeditionary Force, detailing the operations

between the 24th and 27th ultimo, which resulted in the capture of the passes north of Gnathong, leading into Tibet, and the complete defeat of the Tibetan forces and their expulsion from the Sikkim State.

2. During the months immediately preceding the action now described, and since the attack on the post of Gnathong by the Tibetans, active operations have been suspended owing to the heavy rains, which, in this inhospitable region, preclude the movement of troops.

The duty of the force has in consequence been confined to watching the enemy, and checking any material inroad into the protected territory of Sikkim.

The Tibetans during this period had advanced their forces, occupying and fortifying the Jalap and Pemberingo passes; and latterly, becoming emboldened, they had invaded the Kupup valley lying at the foot of the passes on the Sikkim side.

3. Brigadier-General Graham, acting on instructions from head-quarters, did not interfere with the proceedings of the Tibetans, but waited for the breaking up of the rains to expel the enemy from the invaded territory.

His orders were to move when the weather permitted, to expel the enemy from the Sikkim State, and to inflict exemplary punishment on them. He was at liberty to cross the passes into Tibet, and to follow the enemy as far as might be necessary to effect the above object, bearing in mind that it was not desired to occupy Tibet, and that the force was to return to Sikkim as soon as the defeat of the enemy had been completed.

4. The advance of the Tibetans on the night of the 23rd September, and the occupation of the Tukola ranges, within sight of the fort of Gnathong, together with some improvement in the weather, afforded the desired opportunity for action, advantage of which was promptly taken. The operations of the force are fully described in the despatch.

5. The complete manner in which Brigadier-General Graham has given effect to his instructions, the general intelligence which he has displayed throughout the operations in Sikkim, the patience exhibited when inaction was imperative, and the skill in seizing the right moment to attack, by doing which he completely defeated and demoralized the large Tibetan force with a minimum of loss to his own troops, have the entire approval of the Commander-in-Chief.

6. In no less degree do the patience and endurance of the officers and soldiers of all ranks during the trying period occupied by this campaign, as well as their bearing in action with the enemy, merit praise and commendation. Confined within the limits of the Gnathong post and valley, at an elevation of 12,600

feet during the wettest season of the year, and occupied only in patrolling in rain and discomfort and observing the encroachments of the Tibetans, it required no small exercise of zeal to maintain a cheerful spirit.

7. The conduct of the force has nevertheless been exemplary, and their discipline and bearing all that could be desired; and the Commander-in-Chief has much pleasure in commending Brigadier-General Graham and the force under his command to the favourable notice of the Governor-General in Council.

8. The severe wounds sustained by Lieutenant-Colonel Sir Benjamin P. Bromhead, *Bart.*, commanding the 32nd Pioneers, will, it is feared, deprive the army of his services for some time to come. This officer has, throughout the campaign, held the position of second-in-command to Brigadier-General Graham, and has merited the confidence and approval of his General and of the Commander-in-Chief. His Excellency, in submitting this despatch, fully endorses the terms of commendation in which the named regimental and staff and departmental officers of the force are mentioned by the Brigadier-General commanding.

9. Returns of casualties during the recent operations are appended.

From Brigadier-General T. Graham, Commanding the Sikkim Expeditionary Force, to the Adjutant-General in India,—(No. 147, dated Camp Gnathong, 2nd October, 1888).

I have the honour to forward, for the information of his Excellency the Commander-in-Chief, a report of the operations resulting in the capture of the passes leading into Tibet, and the defeat of the Tibetan army commanded by Gnabu Dephen.

2. At daybreak on the morning of the 24th ultimo, it could be seen from Fort Gnathong that the Tibetans had occupied in force the whole range of hills from the Tukola Peak on the west, past Mount Paul, to the Trigonometrical point on the east, and had also placed an advanced post on an isolated hill in the upper Gnathong valley. The greater part of this position, which is nearly three miles in length, appeared to be strengthened by a stone wall some three or four feet in height. The enemy announced his presence by loud shouts and the frequent discharge of *jinjals*, and also some cannon of a larger size, which were placed at intervals. Considering that the position could not have been occupied until some time after dark the previous evening, I estimate that at least 7000 men must have been at work during the night.

3. As it soon became evident that the Tibetans did not intend to advance nearer to Gnathong, I decided to assume the offensive.

4. Before starting, the men had their breakfasts, and a day's cooked rations per man was arranged for, to be carried in their haversacks. The mules were also ordered from Shalambi, and the men's kits packed ready to be sent on after the advancing columns, as well as two days' rations, which had previously been made over to regiments in view of an advance.

5. By 8 a.m. all was ready, and the force advanced to the attack in three columns as follows:

(1.) The Left Column, under my personal command, was

Left Column—Order of march.
1 company, 2-1st Gurkha Regiment (advance guard).

2 companies, 2-1st Gurkha Regiment.

4 guns, No. 9-1st, Northern Division, Royal Artillery.

3 companies, 2-1st Gurkha Regiment.

3 companies and head-quarters 2nd Battalion Derbyshire Regiment.

composed of the troops shown in the margin. This column was to advance past No. IV. block-house, up the south side of the ridge leading to the Tukola Peak, which was the key to the enemy's position, as from it the remainder of his line of defence could be enfiladed.

(2) The Centre Column, as per margin, under command of

Centre Column—Strength.
3 companies, 32nd Pioneers.

Lieutenant-Colonel Sir B. P. Bromhead, *Bart.*, 32nd Pioneers, was directed to proceed up the main Tukola road, keeping level with the

left column, to which it was to act as a right flank guard.

(3) The Right Column, as per margin, under command of

Right Column—Strength.
1 company, 2nd Battalion Derbyshire Regiment.

2 companies, 32nd Pioneers.

2 Fort guns (worked by Pioneers).

Major H. C. Halkett, 32nd Pioneers, was directed to proceed to the Saddle Back, north-east of Woodcock Hill, and hold its position there, with a view to meeting any forward movement of the enemy's

left, and also to deceive him as to our real point of attack.

6. Major T. H. Goldney, 32nd Pioneers, was left in command of the fort, with three companies of his regiment and small guards of the 2nd Battalion Derbyshire Regiment and 2-1st Gurkha Regiment.

7. At about 9.30 a.m. the guns of the Right Column came into action against the enemy's walls in the centre of the valley, and made excellent practice. They were assisted by volleys from a section of the Derbyshire Regiment; and about 10 a.m. the occupants of the walls were seen retiring rapidly towards Mount Paul.

8. The Centre Column next became engaged, at about 10 a.m., having got somewhat ahead of the left column, owing to having an easier road to traverse, and also to the mist, which covered the whole valley shortly after the advance began, rendering it almost

impossible to maintain communication with the left column. About a quarter of an hour later, Colonel Sir B. P. Bromhead had made his way without loss to a point on the road some 300 yards from the Tukola Pass; and here he halted, sending Lieutenant Holland with a small party to the top of the hill on his immediate left.

9. At 10 a.m. the Left Column had reached a peak 800 yards from the Tukola, and the guns fired two or three rounds at the enemy's fortifications on the Peak, taking advantage of a transient glimpse of his position obtained through the mist. At 10.30 the Gurkhas of the advance guard reached the hill occupied by Lieutenant Holland's party; and both they and the Pioneers on the road below opened a hot fire on the enemy, which was replied to vigorously all along their line of walls, but with little effect, as most of their bullets passed harmlessly over our heads, and only two Pioneers were slightly wounded.

10. Ten minutes later, our men having recovered their breath, I directed Captain Robinson, who was in command of the three leading companies of Gurkhas, to storm the Tukola Peak, taking with him Lieutenant Holland's party of Pioneers. This was done in capital style; Colonel Sir B. P. Bromhead's party at the same time advancing along the road, straight at the pass itself. The Tibetans waited until our men were within fifty yards of them, and then turned and fled, their walls being at once occupied by the Gurkhas and Pioneers, who opened a hot fire on the fugitives. On seeing their right turned, the remainder of the Tibetans apparently considered further resistance hopeless, and the flight became general along their whole line.

11. The guns were at once brought into action on the Tukola Peak, against the enemy, who were retreating over the Nimla Pass. Colonel Sir B. P. Bromhead, with the Pioneers, was directed to pursue along the main road, two companies of the Gurkhas being with him and the Derbyshire in close support, whilst Lieutenant-Colonel Rogers, with the remainder of the Gurkhas, took the direct road along the ridge towards Mount Paul, keeping one company in the valley on his left.

The guns advanced as soon as their fire was masked by the advancing infantry; and by noon the whole of the centre and right columns was concentrated at the Nimla Pass, with the exception of the Gurkhas under Lieutenant-Colonel Rogers, who had pursued the enemy over Mount Paul to the entrance to the Pemberingo Pass, where they had halted.

12. I now halted and allowed the men to rest, whilst I prepared for the attack on the passes.

13. I despatched the Pioneers of the Centre Column, who were now commanded by Lieutenant Holland, owing to Colonel Sir B. P. Bromhead having been severely wounded shortly after leaving

the Tukola Pass, to join the right column, which had advanced to Mount Paul; and directed Major Halkett to send his company of the Derbyshire Regiment to join me, and with the remainder of his force hold in check the Pemberingo Tibetans, whilst I attacked the Jalap Pass. At the same time I signalled to Colonel Rogers to move to the north end of the Bidangcho Lake, and halt until I joined him. A message was also sent to the detachment of the 13th Bengal Infantry at Shalambi to join me as soon as possible.

14. By 2 p.m. all necessary movements were completed, and I

Order of March against Jalap Pass.

1 company, Derbyshire Regiment (advance-guard).

1 company, Derbyshire Regiment.

4 guns, No. 9-1st, Northern Division, Royal Artillery (with escort of 50 Gurkhas).

2 companies, Derbyshire Regiment.

5½ companies, 1st Gurkha Regiment.

moved forward against the Jalap Pass. The force advanced in the order shown in the margin; and as soon as the entrance to the Jalap Valley was reached, the guns came into action, two on the spur on the left bank of the stream and two on some high ground immediately below, firing first at the lower and afterwards at the centre Jalap wall. At the same time the infantry formed for attack in the valley itself, the Derbyshire on the left of the road and the Gurkhas parallel to them on the right.

15. The Tibetans replied to the guns but feebly with *jinjals* and matchlocks; and after a few rounds had been fired, I directed the infantry to advance. On their approach the enemy retreated rapidly, and the lower and centre walls were occupied successively almost without opposition.

16. The force bivouacked in the pass; and as the baggage did not come up until after midnight, and the rain came down heavily, the men passed an uncomfortable night.

17. The next morning (25th) the pursuit was continued over

Order of march across Jalap Pass.

1 company, Derbyshire Regiment (advance guard).

3 companies, Derbyshire Regiment.

4 guns, No. 9-1st, Northern Division, Royal Artillery.

6 companies, 1st Gurkha Regiment.

Detachment, 13th Bengal Infantry (rear guard).

the pass to Rinchagong, distance about ten miles, the column being formed as shown in the margin. But little resistance was encountered *en route*, only a few long shots being fired at the advance guard; but our progress was much impeded by the rough and precipitous nature of the road, which was covered with large rocks and boulders. The enemy had, moreover, broken down three out of the seven bridges over which the road passes, thus causing additional delays.

18. Rinchagong was reached at 4 p.m., and beyond a few shots fired as soon as we came in sight and replied to by the advance guard, it was undefended. The enemy's loss was four or

five killed in the village, and several fugitives were also shot. As we entered the village, a stream of men flying from the direction of Pemberingo could be seen coming down a ridge to the south; on perceiving us, however, they turned off in the direction of Bhutan.

19. The night was passed without molestation, though several Tibetans, who endeavoured to pass the Derbyshire picquet, which was on the Pemberingo road, were shot.

20. The next morning (26th) the force proceeded to Chambi, three miles up the Mochu River, the bivouacs for the night being at Myatong, two miles on the Jalap side of Rinchagong.

21. The enemy appeared to be completely disorganised and thoroughly beaten and dispirited, not a single shot being fired at the force during the march to Chambi.

22. The day following, the 27th ultimo, the force returned to Gnathong, a long march of fifteen miles, the ascent to the summit of the Jalap Pass being particularly trying both for men and animals, and the difficulties of the road being much increased by the pouring rain.

23. The number of the enemy opposed to us on the 24th ultimo was, so far as can be ascertained, about 11,000, of which some 8000 advanced to the Tukola Ridge. They possessed about twenty *jingals* and small cannon, but these were withdrawn early in the fight and either hidden or carried away, and frequent search parties, subsequently sent out, have failed to discover them. One six-pounder brass smooth-bore field gun, complete with carriage, was captured and brought to Gnathong. Large quantities of powder, arrows, and other warlike stores were destroyed at Rinchagong.

24. The Tibetan loss may be estimated at 400 killed, and at least as many more wounded. About 200 prisoners remained in our hands, but many of those captured across the passes, being wounded, were released.

25. Our loss was Lieutenant-Colonel Sir B. P. Bromhead, *Bart.*, commanding the 32nd Pioneers, severely wounded; one sepoy, 2-1st Gurkha Regiment, severely wounded; and two sepoy, 32nd Pioneers, slightly wounded. I attach a report of the casualties.

26. I would further wish to record my high opinion of the behaviour of the troops throughout these operations. Not only was the fire well controlled during action, as is evidenced by the fact that some eight or nine per cent. of shots fired took effect, but during the subsequent pursuit, which involved much hard work and more than ordinary exposure to wet and cold, the spirit evinced by all ranks could not have been surpassed. Officers and men vied with one another in exhibiting a cheerfulness under

difficulties, and a determination to overcome them, which I gladly take this opportunity of bringing to his Excellency's notice.

27. In conclusion, I beg specially to mention the following officers :

Lieutenant-Colonel Sir Benjamin P. Bromhead, *Bart.*, commanding the 32nd Pioneers, has, throughout the campaign, been of the greatest assistance to me, and on this occasion specially was conspicuous by the able manner in which he conducted the advance of the centre column. The loss which the force has sustained by his being severely wounded can hardly be over-estimated.

My thanks are also due to Lieutenant-Colonel J. McCleverty, commanding the 2nd Battalion, Derbyshire Regiment; Lieutenant-Colonel G. W. Rogers, commanding the 2-1st Gurkha Regiment; and Major J. Keith, commanding the Royal Artillery, for the manner in which they assisted me in carrying out my plans; and also to Major H. C. Halkett, 32nd Pioneers, for the admirable way in which the advance of the right column was conducted.

Being obliged to leave some officer upon whom I could rely in command of the fort, I selected Major T. H. Goldney, 32nd Pioneers, for this duty, which he performed in the most satisfactory manner.

I would bring especially to notice the conduct of Captain G. H. Robinson, 1-1st Gurkha Regiment (attached to the 2-1st Gurkha Regiment), and Lieutenant G. L. Holland, 34th Pioneers (officiating Adjutant, 32nd Pioneers), during the assault on the Tukola, the capture of which decided the fate of the day. On the latter officer devolved the command of that portion of the 32nd Pioneers which formed the Centre Column after Colonel Sir B. P. Bromhead was wounded; and though he has been but a short time with the regiment, I was able to see that he had thorough control over his men, and kept them well in hand.

To Captain E. A. Travers, 1-2nd Gurkha Regiment, Deputy Assistant Adjutant-General of the Expeditionary Force, I am deeply indebted. His tact and judgment, his careful attention to detail, and the very frequent reconnaissances he has made, have been on all occasions of the greatest assistance to me; and I would especially wish to record how much I appreciate his valuable services.

To Captain H. Mansfield, Chief Commissariat Officer, my special thanks are due, not only for the able and untiring manner in which he has throughout supervised commissariat and transport matters, but especially for his admirable arrangements on this occasion, owing to which the successful advance of the force to Chambi was very largely due.

The medical arrangements of the force were carried out satis-

factorily by Surgeon-Major R. H. Carew, Medical Staff, senior medical officer with the Force.

RETURN OF CASUALTIES IN THE SIKKIM FIELD FORCE
ON THE 24TH SEPTEMBER, 1888.

Wounded.

Lieutenant-Colonel Sir Benjamin P. Bromhead, *Bart.*, 32nd Bengal Infantry, *severely*.

Sepoy Gurdit Sing, 32nd Bengal Infantry (Pioneers), *slightly*.

Sepoy Jwala Sing, 32nd Bengal Infantry (Pioneers), *slightly*.

Sepoy Karbir Thápa, 2nd Battalion, 1st Gurkha Regiment, *severely*.

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Regiment in the Sikkim Expedi-
tion of 1888.
Author
Iggulden H.A.

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